セブンス 7th 7

illustration
ともぞ」
Yomu Mishima
三嶋与夢」

ヒーロー文庫

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Yomu Mishima
三嶋与夢

宿屋の部屋――
窓を開け、俺は大声で叫ぶ。

「みんな、
美しい俺を
見てー――っ！」

馬車から姿を見せたのは……
忘れもしないセレスだった。

目の前で紅茶を飲んでいる女性は
【リアーヌ・ファン・バイユ】――
バンセイム王国の王太子殿下の元婚約者だ。

ライエルが馬鹿にしているとは思っていないが、
ミランダとシャノンにとってはデリケートな問題だ。
冗談を言われても笑えるだけの余裕がない。
そんな二人にライエルは言う。

「この俺を――
ライエル・ウォルトを
選んだのだ。
誇っていいぞ」

「お姉様、本当にこいつに
ついていくつもりですか？」

「その程度の武器で
どうにかなると
思ったのかしらね？」

セレスが大剣を蹴り上げ、
俺が大きく仰け反ると接近してきた。
無理矢理大剣を振り下ろすと、
今度はレイピアを振う。
レイピアの刃が熱を放ち、
赤く染まっていた。
その刃に、俺の大剣はズタズタにされ
破壊され砕け散る。

INTRODUCTION

宮廷貴族の企みを潰し、**グリフォン**を討伐した**ライエル**たちは、

王都で不審な噂を耳にする。

バンセイム王国の王太子が婚約を破棄し、

さらに、その後すぐに新しい婚約者が出来たのだという。

元々婚約していた女性は**ファンバイユ王国**の姫君。

ファンバイユ王国はかつての戦争相手であり、

そんな相手との婚約を破棄したとなれば、

いつ戦争が起きてもおかしくはない。

しかし、王都の住民は何故か気にしていない上に、

婚約破棄された姫、**【リアーヌ】**もバンセイムに滞在したままだという。

ライエルはとある接点からリアーヌに会うことになり、

婚約破棄の真相を教えてもらう。

この国の異常の原因は――**【セレス・ウォルト】**。

そう、かつてライエルを屋敷から追い出した張本人であり、

因縁の相手である妹だった。

ついに本格的に動き出したセレスは

王国中を巻き込み、人々を狂乱に陥れていく。

『邪神の子』セレスのおぞましい力の正体とは――。

歴代当主アーツ紹介 004
プロローグ 007
第七十八話 凱旋 030
第七十九話 全裸 056
第八十話 交渉 089
第八十一話 レムラントの奇跡 108
第八十二話 義将スレイ・ウォルトー 135
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CONTENTS

Prologue

It would be great if the peaceful days continued without any incident.

Such small wish of me, Lyle Walt was broken apart ephemerally.

"I wonder why I don’t have any wings. If only I have wings, I will spread my wings in this blue sky and dance in the sky. Yes, I will become a bird!"

Aria-san placed her left hand on her chest and her right hand was extended as though to grasp the sky. She was looking up to the cloudy sky of winter that was grey colored.

—There wasn’t anything like blue sky anywhere.

Clara-san was grinning at Aria-san’s speech while replying.

"You are calling this cloudy sky as blue sky? Your eyes are really bad. Although, spear will be more fitting for Aria-san rather than wings. Cutting down monsters with blood splashing in the battlefield is more fitting for you isn’t it? If you want to become a bird than I recommend becoming a griffon. It’s really perfect for a savage like you."

Clara-san who usually spoke little without letting any emotion showing on her face was becoming a character that spewing poison from her mouth.

I was hiding my face with both hands.

Because there was one more person who I didn’t want to look at.

"Aria want to become a bird? How nice. I also want to become a bird. But, I’m fine becoming a bird who is put inside a birdcage so that I won’t be able to fly anywhere. Lyle, become my birdcage!"

Miranda-san stared straight at me and said such line.

The three entered the “post-growth” state when Bahnseim Kingdom’s capital, Centralle was in front of us.

Growth. That was a drastic change of body.

A person’s health would abruptly worsen before growth. They would be suffering for a day until several days.

But, when it was over, the person’s capability physically and magically would increase greatly. To say it simply they would become stronger.

……At the same time with that, they would be enveloped in exaltation and their mental state would be in a dangerous state.

Miranda-san approached me.

"Lyle, if you dislike birdcage then a rope is also fine. Tie me tightly! So that I won’t be able to go anywhere! I want to tie you. And then, I want to be tied!"

If it was the usual Miranda-san, she absolutely wouldn’t say this kind of line.

Clara-san was laughing so hard she held her stomach while rolling on the ground.

"She said that she want to be tied! There is an outrageous pervert here! Well, from the beginning she is a spider woman who produces string and ties people, so perhaps it perfectly suits her instead! Lyle-san……my condolence!"

Just what was she giving me her condolence for? Was it about me being liked by Miranda-san who was like this? Or perhaps it was about this situation?

Miranda-san seemed to feel hurt by Clara-san's words. She was making a sad face.

"Horrible. I'm not a pervert. My shackles are just a bit strong!"

A bit? I was holding doubt that it might be really strong.

I who was dealing with the noisy three girls……or rather I who was captured and had no choice but to keep them company turned my gaze to around me looking for help.

Beside Porter that was parked along the road, there was Monica being busy with food preparation.

When she saw me she waved her hand energetically.

"Chicken dickwad, please look forward to the dinner today!"

No good. Even though her master was looking for help, she was absorbed with the food for me to eat and didn't notice my situation.

A slight distance away, Sophia-san was standing still expressionlessly.

The state of the three seemed to remind her of herself a little while ago—herself that committed a blunder post-growth. Light was vanishing from her eyes.

"……I want to disappear."

She sat down on the spot and hugged her knees. It was harsh to ask for help from her. I turned my gaze to my other comrades.

"Look at this, Novem! I made a new costume!"

"That looks good on you, Eva-san. You also used good textile for the material."

"Yep! I snatched……no, asked for the material that Monica is using!"

Eva-san made a new costume because she was free during the travel. She finished a risqué and lascivious costume so she was in a good mood.

She was showing it off to Novem proudly.

But, the material for it seemed to belong to Monica so—.

"Oy, the hopeless elf over there! Don’t use my thing as you please! Even though that was a material to make chicken dickwad’s clothes!"

Monica rushed there in criticism. Eva-san retorted back to the enraged Monica.

"It’s okay if you share it a bit with me! Besides, it was you who told me that you would give me the material if I help out."

"This elf is really impudent when you’ve only helped out for a bit. —More importantly, isn’t the size of the waist mistaken?"

"Tha, that’s not true. Re, recently I ate too much but, I’ll slim down immediately so there’s no problem."

"……I hope that’s true."

Monica made a meaningful expression and left from that place in order to resume her cooking.

When she passed in front of me, I heard her muttering "From today I’ll prepare menu with high calorie" while laughing.

Novem warned Eva-san.

"Eva-san, taking someone else’s possession without permission isn’t praiseworthy even if it’s with a friend, or rather exactly because it’s with a friend."

"……I’m sorry. But, even I had properly helped her before I took it."

"Even so the person’s permission is necessary."

Eva-san honestly obeyed Novem, but it seemed that the scolding would still continue so they couldn’t help me.

My last hope became the most useless Shannon.

When I turned my gaze at Shannon,

"Monica, look! How is it, this stance!"

She was showing the stance of raging sparrow happily in front of Monica.

It was a stance that was the beginning stance and yet also the secret technique.

It was the secret technique of the martial art that I and Shannon studied under Monica.

Originally it was a stance without really any meaning, but by learning martial art and polishing technique, the meaningless stance would turn into one with meaning at the end—like that it would become a secret technique that was unique only to that person.

When I first heard it, I thought that it was an absurdly amazing stance.

I intended to complete it one day.

But, Shannon’s stance was……bluntly speaking it was full of opening.

It only looked like a stupid pose.

Monica must have the same opinion like me.

"That’s no good. In the first place it’s full of opening. It’s not something that can be improved just by changing the stance. Redo it."

Shannon’s shoulders dropped dejectedly. She looked seriously depressed.

"No way……even though I’ve thought hard about it"

Come to think of it, I got the feeling that she said one thing or another about the secret technique when eating snack. After that, she seemed to immediately get bored with it and started playing around. It was really just like Shannon.

Monica was cooking while giving advice to Shannon.

"Right now you should focus on the basic. Something like the completion of the secret technique is ten years too early for you. No, I’m serious. You better think that it will really take ten years."

"I can’t wait that long! I want to complete it faster than that gigolo bastard Lyle!"

I glared at Shannon who called me gigolo bastard, but she didn’t notice me at all.

Shannon who was playing with Monica also didn’t seem like she could save me.

In the first place, even if that girl noticed my situation, would she become any help?

……That’s impossible.

I sighed, then Aria-san grabbed my hand.

"Eh?"

"Now, Lyle—let’s dance!"

"No, I’ll refrain from that……A, Aria-san!"

The strength of Aria-san who was forcefully holding my hand was stronger than I expected and I couldn’t get away.

I was made to accompany Aria-san’s dance.

I who got both my hands grabbed felt my feet leaving the ground when Aria-san was starting to rotate around on that spot. She began to swing me around.

"Wait! Stop! Stop now, Aria-san! ARIA-SAAAAN!"

"Ahahaha, you’re unexpectedly skilled Lyle!"

"This is scary! I’m floatiiiinnng!"

Miranda-san who was watching me and Aria-san were giving applause.

"Dance with me next. I want the dance where our body will press close to each other."

Clara-san was smiling at me.

"It’s great isn’t it, Lyle-san. I’m not envious at the slightest though. But, you being dragged around by a girl like that really suit you."

The figure of Clara-san who was always expressionless but kind deep inside wasn’t there.

"SOMEONE HELPPPPP!"

The voices of five people came from the Jewel hanging from the neck of me who was being swung around.

The cursed item that guided me to this point—not that. It was the voices of the five ancestors who were resurrected as memory and gave me guidance.

The Third, Sleigh Walt was laughing cheerfully too today.

[Aria-chan is really energetic.]

The Fourth, Max Walt spoke in slight exasperation.

[She has no calmness at all. However, this is her unstable period post-growth. Lyle, you should give proper follow-up for everyone too later.]

The Fifth, Fredericks Walt was someone of few words.

[……Well, do your best.]

While I was thinking if he didn't have any other advice, the Sixth Fiennes Walt seemed to be perplexed.

[I wish that Miranda will have more calmness. As Milleia's great granddaughter, she should be more girly. Don't you think so, Lyle?]

I didn't know Miranda-san's great grandmother.

I had no way to answer that opinion.

The Seventh, Brod Walt was muttering complaints.

[I think this is typical of aunt's great granddaughter though. More importantly, Clara really has a bad mouth.]

Could it be, usually she wanted to say various complaints but she buried them deep inside?

And the recoil from that influenced her post-growth?

The current Clara-san was so expressive and badmouthed that I had such thinking. I wished that she would express herself more frequently but…….

When my thought reached that point, Aria-san let go of my hands that she grabbed.

"……Ah"

I made a stupid voice. And then I was thrown on the air.

Aria-san was dizzy and fell on the spot.

"My eyes are dizzy, ahahaha!"

Miranda-san reached out toward me,

"Aa, Lyle!"

I wished she would save me if possible. Clara-san was laughing.

"Uwaa~, so human can fly. I've to write down what happen today!"

She took out a memo and looked up at me who was thrown away by Aria-san's stupid strength.

The height was relatively something that couldn't be laughed at.

When I looked below, a river was flowing there…….

"No more!"

I fell into the river.

I crawled out of the cold river and warmed my body beside a bonfire.

The season was in the middle of winter.

Beside me who was trembling from the cold there was Monica diligently acting too helpful.

"Uee~h, chicken dickwad! For something like this to happen when I wasn’t at your side!"

She covered me with blanket while crying and brought me food.

Shannon was looking at me while laughing.

"That suits you, gigolo bastard."

"You’re the gigolo."

"Haa? I’m properly working! I was also helping today mon!"

What do you mean, mon!, huh?

Did you intend to claim that helping with housework was a working? In that case I who was working many times more than you wasn’t a gigolo!

Eva-san was laughing in amusement.

"You flew really far. Aria, that’s some stupid strength you get there."

Sophia-san was nodding.

"She became even tougher after the growth. It'll be a disaster if she rampage with that superhuman strength. Well, it seems she will calm down soon."

Sophia-san's gaze was directed at the three who were made to sit in seiza posture.

In front of the three was Novem who was standing imposingly with her back turned toward us.

I couldn't see her expression from here, but I understood that she was angry.

"……To throw Lyle-sama into the river, just what's with that act!?"

She was enraged and her tone turned rough.

Her atmosphere that was different from usual felt scary.

Aria-san who was calming down was making excuse to such Novem.

"Because. I didn't think that he would fly that far mon."

……mon, she said.

It was a bit cute so it made me felt like forgiving her.

No, that's not it. I too was bothersome at my post-growth, so I couldn't be angry with just this much.

I spoke to Novem to forgive them with that.

"Novem, the three of them are in their post-growth so forgive them. Look, they're gradually calming down so it's fine."

Even the three who were in high tension since the morning was recovering their calmness around the evening.

It was scary to recover your calmness after the growth.

It was the set pattern that the next day people would think calmly about the matter yesterday and then writhed in shame.

Novem turned toward me.

"There are things that are alright to do and bad to do."

"You’re right but……it’s already dark, and it’s cold so"

The coldness would also worsen more when the sun set.

I wanted the three of them to quickly warm themselves and then went to sleep.

"……I understand. The three of you, please apologize properly to Lyle-sama okay?"

Miranda-san who was told that immediately stood up and hugged me.

"Lyle, Novem was scary! Console me."

Miranda-san was showing a smile that was filled with playfulness, but standing behind her Novem was smiling.

It was scary even though she was smiling.

"……It looks like you still don’t understand, Miranda-san."

Miranda-san looked back and saw Novem’s face.

"My, how scary."

She sent a provocative smile.

Even post-growth, Miranda-san was Miranda-san.

As for Clara-san, she stood up and passionately wrote in her memo.

"I'll properly write down what happened today. And then tomorrow I'll convey to the two who'll be writhing tomorrow about what happened in great detail! I'll turn this into material of talk that'll make them remember at the time they forgot about this!"

……Aa, Clara-san still hadn't calmed down.

Aria-san was looking at me.

"That's really nice Miranda……I also want to hug. That's right! I heard that warming each other with naked body is good when it's cold."

Aria-san suddenly tried to strip her clothes. Sophia-san ran at her and stopped her.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOINGGGGG!?"

"Let me go! We'll warm each other. I and Lyle will warm each other with our naked body and love!"

"Calm down! You'll regret it! Tomorrow, you'll regret it!"

"I won't regret it! I'm living for the sake of love! Besides I'm really interested! I'm really interested with man's naked—"

"ARIAAAAA! Please stop already!"

I quietly averted my gaze from that scene.

……I couldn't watch anymore.

Then, Eva-san sat down beside me.

My clothes were hanged to dry nearby using the bonfire's heat.

Eva-san was talking to me during the noisiness.

"This party is really lively and fun."

"Today it’s too lively though."

"It’s better than a stiff atmosphere. After all human relationship is complicated anywhere. This kind of fun is still better."

She must have seen it from meeting various people in her travel.

Eva-san looked like she was having fun.

"More importantly, why are we going to enter the capital ahead of the subjugation force? It doesn’t really matter even if we’re together isn’t it?"

We were heading to the capital.

We participated in the hippogriff subjugation force that was dispatched from the capital and currently we were returning back.

Originally it would be desirable to match the pace of the rest and entered the capital with the rest of the troops.

But, we were existence that the royal capital—the capital noble in the palace wouldn’t welcome.

It was the nobles in the palace who were scheming to exterminate us.

Even though we were told that the subjugation target was hippogriff, it was a griffon that came out. It was a monster that was bigger and more fiendish that hippogriff.

They expected us to be annihilated. And then for the palace nobles who schemed that, our safe return wouldn’t be an amusing matter.

"We have to arrive ahead and advertise our return. I think that the rumor has at least spread in the capital, so we have to show the proof too."

Eva-san nodded with a smile.

Eva-san was the one who worked hard to spread the rumor through the traveling performer elves.

"The capital will be in excitement. But, do we need to go that far?"

Wasn't that unnecessary?

Eva-san seemed to think that. In respond voices came from inside the Jewel. They were answering Eva-san's question, but I was the only one who could hear their voices.

The Fourth explained with a slightly chilly voice.

[If we don't do anything, the palace will find fault with us and give us punishment after all. If we don't take measures to the degree that it seems overdoing it, it will be dangerous for us. Even so, the capital's degeneracy is terrible whether now or in the past huh.]

The Fifth seemed to recall the era when he was living. I could feel irritation from his tone.

[They are always horrible even with some degree of difference. Well, there is nothing better than to be on your guard.]

I conveyed those opinions of the ancestors to Eva-san.

"We're only taking all measures that we can do. It will be too late to start doing anything only after things happened."

I myself had the feeling if we really had to do this much, but the five people who had more abundant life experience than me were saying this so it shouldn't be mistaken.

……It was only five people now.

One of the voices vanishing made me felt strangely lonely.

"You’re unexpectedly cautious. Well, it might be good for the leader to be like that."

I tried asking Eva-san.

"More importantly, are you all right with coming along with us? If no incident happens like this, we will continue to the east. And then we will head to Beim."

The free city. The capital of adventurer and merchant. It had various nicknames, but it was a famous large metropolis where adventurers gathered.

It wasn’t a territory of Bahnseim Kingdom, but a foreign country.

Eva-san’s eyes were sparkling.

"Do you think I’m fixated with the kingdom? I want to see the world with these eyes. The wider world. I’ll gather even more amazing song and story! It will be the best if I also find a story that only I know during that time. I’m holding expectation for Lyle. Accomplish a great thing like griffon subjugation okay?"

Eva-san who was a singer wanted to sing a tale that only she knew one day.

If it was in order to do that, she intended to go anywhere.

I could only feel surprised at the passion of elf toward son and story.

"……Well, the winter will become colder after this though. We won’t travel or do any work for a while."

Eva-san crossed her legs and turned her gaze to the bonfire with a dissatisfied face. But, she might understood from traveling alone and accepted my plan.

"As expected even me have no intention of acting recklessly at winter. It feels like this year will become cold, and even the snow feels like it'll be thick."

Snow would also fall in Bahnseim Kingdom.

If possible, I wanted to depart toward the east after taking care of the mess in the capital.

And then I wanted to spend winter in a large town or city somewhere.

There was one other large reason for this.

The Fifth murmured in nostalgia.

[Winter huh……this period is the leisure season for farmers after all.]

The Seventh also didn't really recommend traveling at winter.

[There'll be skirmishes everywhere. Depending on the situation, you can even expect war at the border. There might even be places that already start.]

Bahnseim was a large country.

There would be nobles fighting other nobles within the country, or even nobles having domestic conflict within family.

There would even be war with other country if we went to the border.

……It was a season when war began.

There were a lot of cases where feudal lord used the populace as soldier, and many of that populace was farmer. If it was leisure season for farmers, then there wouldn’t be any problem to mobilize them as soldiers.

If they forced a war at the busy period, the harvest at winter would become few.

The situation would be the same anywhere, because of that this was also the time period where the situation became busy.

Eva-san sighed.

"We’ll get dragged in if we carelessly travel, this period is really unpleasant."

I agreed with that opinion.

"……That’ll be unpleasant."

The Third was also agreeing from the Jewel with our opinion.

He was a hero who left his name in Bahnseim’s history as a righteous general but…….

[I also understand the reason why they’re doing it though. War is really unpleasant. I didn’t want to die in the battlefield. I wanted to age peacefully and die on bed.]

There was weight to it when the Third said those words.

Anyway, it would be better to not really move around in winter.

Even if we were going to move we would need various preparations.

It would be best to act again when it became warmer.

Eva-san muttered.

"We might end up spending winter in the capital at this rate."

……I wanted to avoid that.

If possible, I wanted to spend winter outside the capital.

Bahnseim Kingdom’s capital, Centralle was surrounded by outer wall that had gates.

We were arriving using a large horse cart. We were wearing hooded robe.

We were obviously adventurer from a glance from our appearance. Our cart was filled with large wooden box. Inside the griffon’s corpse was placed in a way so that the surrounding could see it.

The dead griffon retained its original shape and looked so real it felt like it would start moving anytime now.

The people coming and going from the gate were making surprised face seeing the griffon.

"Is that griffon?"

"It’s similar with a hippogriff that I saw in the past."

"It has the same eagle head after all. But, the size is different."

"Could it be, this is the rumored—"

People who showed interest in front of the fiendish monster, and people who were scared and watched from distance.

There were various reactions, but everyone witnessed the griffon’s appearance.

The gate guards approached us.

"If you aren't together with the subjugation force then this is a different griffon huh—you guys, are you adventurer?"

I took off my hood and replied.

"Yes. We defeated a griffon so we're thinking to sell it at the capital. The monster parts are precious material but, when it comes to griffon I believe there'll be a lot of merchants who want to purchase it whole."

The guards looked at us.

It wasn't like I said anything wrong.

The royal capital was the capital city.

There were a lot of wealthy merchant here. There were surely people who would want to buy the griffon whole and made it into stuffed animal.

Adventurers coming to the capital intentionally was also a natural story if their purpose was to increase their face.

The impressed guards didn't really suspect us and let us passed.

"You guys are young but skilled huh. It's alright that you want to gain reputation in the capital but, don't cause any trouble here."

I nodded understandingly.

"Of course. We won't bother anyone."

The Sixth's voice came from my Jewel.

[We're the side who got troubled after all. Now then……we'll have it in the bag if we enter inside! Lyle, advertise it!]

After pulling the horse cart through the gate, a lot of people seemed to hear the rumor and gathered.

People were gathering more than usual around the gate that had heavy traffic.

I raised my voice in front of those people.

"If you want to listen to the story of griffon subjugation, please come to the plaza ahead of here. We will talk of how we fought this griffon."

I boldly advanced forward before the citizens who were sending me curious gazes.

It was just as the Sixth said.

It was right in the bag if we entered.

It was already too late no matter what the palace would try.

When I looked at Eva-san, she was covering her mouth with a face of displeasure.

"It’s always dusty around the gate. I hate it because it hurt my throat."

I pointed at the direction of the plaza.

"Eva-san, I’ll leave the rest to you."

Eva-san’s eyes immediately sparkled.

"Leave it to me. I’ll advertise it loudly."

It was really reliable to have an elf comrade at

Chapter 78 – Triumphal Return

—The day Lyle and co arrived at the capital.

The head of Circry House, Ralph Circry was heading to the capital in a hurry.

It was already night. He received summon from the palace when he returned to his mansion after finishing his day work.

The reason he was summoned was the rumor spreading in the capital.

"……That brat."

He entered into the meeting room where the nobles were waiting even while feeling annoyed.

There were irritated people inside, and also people who were drinking wine quietly.

All of them were nobles with peerage that was higher than baron.

They were real nobles with rank higher than baron who were recognized as genuine noble.

When Ralph arrived, the count who took the role as the mediator of the gathered people opened his mouth.

"Viscount Circry, have you heard?"

Ralph could only nod when he was asked whether he had grasped the situation.

"……Yes."

"That’s good. It saves the time to explain. Now then, the reason you’re called is none other than this. ……It became necessary to reward the heroes who accomplished the griffon subjugation."

The count’s face was extremely cold even while mentioning the heroes.

Ralph who was also the father of Miranda and Shannon understood what the count wanted to say.

"Perhaps we should prepare medals and rewards."

He suggested to give the subjugation force some money and medal.

But, the nobles involved with the military matter opposed that.

"Just that much reward even though they have accomplished griffon subjugation will make the kingdom’s dignity to be in question. There will be dissatisfaction if we don’t at least prepare annuity along with the medal and also promotion. The dissatisfaction won’t come from the subjugation force, but from the knights and soldiers instead."

The hippogriff subjugation force that they originally thought would be annihilated was unexpectedly accomplishing their mission and returned. No one ever imagined that this would happen.

Ralph was in a position of civil official.

His opinion often clashed with that noble who was a military officer.

"I wish that you will say something like that only after securing the budget for it."

Ralph didn’t falter even when the other party glared at him.

A noble who looked weak-minded made a suggestion in respond to Ralph’s objection.

"I, in that case, let’s say that the subjugation force has caused problem and punish them. For example saying that they had pillaged some villages in their way, anyway let’s invent something that’ll make it so we don’t need to pay the reward for the griffon subjugation—"

The count punched the table with his fist in respond to that opinion and replied.

He was expressing his intent so that the other party wouldn’t speak anymore.

"The griffon already entered the capital. Some adventurers advertised it extensively and the subjugation force is now treated as hero. When I hurriedly investigated it, the rumor has spread until the surrounding area."

The count threw some documents on the table.

Ralph took them and frowned after giving them a look.

"That brat."

Ralph’s muttering was directed toward Lyle.

There, the report was writing of the rumor praising just how noble and strong the subjugation force was.

It had become a hot topic in the capital from a little while ago, and then when people saw the subjugated griffon they thought that the rumor was true and spread it even further.

The count concluded in annoyance.

"Do you understand? We have no choice but to welcome those guys."

There were several reasons why they had no choice but to warmly welcome Lyle and others. No, it would be more troublesome if they didn't warmly welcome the subjugation force.

It would be possible to invent some trumped-up charges, but there were many people involved here. Too many.

And then the time.

The time to deal with this was too little.

A part of the subjugation force was already entering the capital.

In order to invent some trumped-up charges, they had to actually burn the villages that they stopped by along the way. The time for that was insufficient.

And then, if the invented trumped-up charges because they didn't want to pay the reward—there was the possibility that the rumor of that fact would be spread.

What would the knights and soldiers that didn't participate in the subjugation force think? *Wouldn't the same thing happen to us too when it's our time?* Yes, there was the possibility of people harboring distrust toward the palace.

If that happened, there was the risk that people wouldn't act when it was important, or perhaps they would only act half-heartedly even if they were ordered.

The worst case was that even if they forcefully slander Lyle and others, the possibility that the opposing faction within the palace would learn of the action of Ralph and co was high.

Anyway, the demerit of not welcoming them was too many.

The count glared at Ralph.

"It seems that your daughter also participated wasn't it? The man who brought along your daughter seems like a really reliable adventurer. You must be really proud as a father."

Ralph clenched his fist hearing that sarcasm.

"……I didn't think that he would be able to defeat a griffon."

"It doesn't matter if that's the truth or not. Let's solve the problem that is right in front of us. We will grant medals along with promotion and annuity to the returning subjugation force. I'll also have you prepare the suitable reward for them. You can do it right, viscount?"

The count didn't say it openly but, he was saying"This is your responsibility. You clean up this mess".

In Bahnseim Kingdom, someone with some amount of achievement would be appreciated with medal and annuity. Every year they would become able to receive the decided amount of money.

In other words, Ralph was told to secure the budget to pay the annuity of several hundred people every year.

Ralph gritted his teeth, but he immediately fixed his expression and replied.

"I'll immediately start working."

The count stood up.

"Right, I'll leave it to you. Good grief, at this busy period—"

The other nobles also left the meeting room.

"At spring the formal announcement—"

"It seems that Viscount Circry don’t have the eyes to judge people."

"His daughter still has better judgment than him."

The nobles were leaving while exchanging sarcasm and snide comment toward Ralph.

Ralph was holding back from speaking roughly inside the empty meeting room. He told himself several times that this place was the palace. He didn’t know if there was anyone listening.

He calmed his breathing, put his fist on his forehead, and waited until his anger abated.

"I’ll make you regret making me—Circry House into enemy."

With fierce anger toward Lyle in his heart, Ralph fixed his expression and left the meeting room—.

The main street of the capital.

Riding on the horse while slowly advancing was the commander of the hippogriff subjugation force, Norma Arnette.

She was waving her hand to the surrounding with a smile.

"No, you should come quicker."

Spectators were gathering at the surrounding to watch the heroes. They lined up and cheered.

The knights and soldiers participating in the subjugation force were also showered with praise and looking embarrassed.

There were also some among them who were waving their hand in response.

I was waiting for them at the plaza. Beside me, Miranda-san was standing with an expression that was slightly tinged with grief. A beauty making such face made for a lovely picture, but it was reminding me of the matter yesterday.

She covered her face with her hands sometimes.

"……I'm ashamed."

Such muttering leaked out.

I didn't laugh at Miranda-san. I couldn't laugh.

"I understand your feeling."

"I want to forget what happened yesterday quickly."

Aria-san was gloomy since the morning. Clara-san was locking herself inside her room. There were many problems.

Novem who was standing at the opposite side of Miranda-san was looking at Norma-san.

"……She is getting carried away. I wish she won't let her guard down."

Did she understand that we were nuisance for the palace?

But, I felt envious at Norma-san who could get carried away like that.

"It's nice how that person is honest to her desire."

Novem also agreed to my muttering.

"Certainly it’s envious. ……I don’t want to learn from her example though."

Norma-san was waving her hand on her horseback. She was enjoying this situation.

The group was parading through the main street in a line. Horse carts were decorated with hippogriff’s head or wings to show off their achievement. IT was like a parade of triumphal return.

I didn’t tell them to do something like this, so this was Norma-san’s arbitrary decision.

Norma-san who finally arrived at the plaza was looking down at us from the horseback.

Her attitude was haughty.

"Good work. You’ve done good job for a mere adventurer."

She was referring to us returning ahead to gather audiences and preparing for the welcome.

Miranda-san instantly turned expressionless.

"That’s really a big attitude. Shouldn’t you show an intimate interaction with us at this place? It’s not like it’ll be a problem with us even if it’s someone else who becomes the hero you know? You……do you want to be crushed?"

Miranda-san’s terribly chilly voice that was mixed in among the cheers froze Norma-san’s smile and she hurriedly came down from the horse.

The subjugation force also stopped marching. They called out to their family that gathered in the plaza with happy expression.

Norma-san asked for a handshake with me with her face fixed into a stiff smile.

She grasped my hand with both hands and then swung it up and down enthusiastically.

"Ha, haha~, Lyle-dono is reliable as expected!"

Norma-san was drenched with cold sweat. It was Novem who gave an additional blow to her.

"Lyle-sama is troubled. Let go of his hand."

"Ye, yes!"

I shook my head at the two's cold attitude.

"Both of you, be kinder. You know, today is everyone's big moment after all."

The members of hippogriff subjugation force that didn't have any expectation on them were receiving the cheers of the people that were warming the chilly air.

Not everyone returned safely, but the survivors were rejoicing with their head held up high.

I and Norma-san showed to the people how close we were.

"Now then, it'll be busy from here."

When I said that, Novem and Miranda-san also nodded.

"Yes. They won't stay quiet after their face is slapped like this."

"It will be my house that move. Now then, what will they do."

I made the hippogriff subjugation force that was originally expected to be annihilated to return alive, in addition I even became the hero of the griffon subjugation.

The people who schemed the subjugation this time—Ralph-san was surely feeling aggravated.

"If possible I want to settle it amicable—e, eh?"

There wasn’t any sign of the cheers settling down.

The people who were sending cheers to family who returned back.

The soldiers and knights showing themselves confidently in front of their family.

The family members who were looking proud……I felt dizzy while watching those.

My body abruptly became pained and it became hard just to stay standing.

Seeing my face turning pale, Novem hurriedly supported me.

"Lyle-sama!"

Miranda-san also immediately managed the situation.

"Norma, you go to the palace to report. I feel bad to throw cold water on those reuniting with their family but, take everyone with you."

Norma-san waved her hand to the surrounding while replying to the flustered us without any doubt.

"I understand that much. No, I really understand so don’t glare at me! I, I’ll go to the palace right away."

Miranda-san glared at her. With that Norma-san hurriedly mounted her horse and resumed the parade.

Supported by Novem, we left from that place with Miranda-san standing at the lead.

Miranda-san talked to me.

"This is troubling. Lyle, could it be—"

I was familiar with this sudden worsening of health.

There was no doubt—.

"So, sorry. I won't be able to move for a while. ……This is pre-growth."

I couldn't put strength into my body. It felt hard to even move……the pre-growth bad health that I couldn't forget even if I wanted to forget made me unable to stop sweating.

Novem supported me and cheered me up with her voice.

"We'll return immediately to the inn. Please rest quietly for a while."

"Re, really……sorry."

To think that I'd become unable to move at this important time.

While I was thinking that, I could hear a voice from inside the Jewel.

[……Mr. Lyle state huh. I'm looking forward to it!]

It was the usual voice of the Third making fun of me.

—The hippogriff subjugation party was surrounded with cheers.

Someone was walking with dark expression among that. It was Lionel—Lionel Walt.

He was muttering to himself with a low voice.

"I’m not wrong. I’m not wrong. I’m not mistaken. The one mistaken is—"

The subjugation party resumed parading.

While they were walking, a voice called out from among the crowd.

"Ah, Lionel!"

When he turned toward that voice, there was the little sister of his friend who lost his life in a battle against monsters.

His friend cherished his little sister. He remembered that friend saying he would buy a present for her if he received a reward.

He slipped out from the walking group and approached the girl who was calling out to him.

"I can’t see Nii-san anywhere. Wasn’t he together with you?"

Lionel spoke with a voice that wasn’t filled with emotion.

"He died."

"—Eh?"

"He died. He got caught by hippogriff and then crushed like that. There is no corpse. I also couldn’t recover any of his things."

The friend’s little sister opened her eyes wide.

"Li, lies. Because, Nii-san is frivolous but, he promised that he would definitely return back. You lie that he died."

0In front of his friend’s little sister who was crying, Lionel grinned widely.

There was madness in that face.

"He got caught when we tried to run away together from the subjugation force and died. He died in a wretched way not while fighting monster or anything, you can’t call it heroic at all. He wasn’t useful at all. He died from running to slow, so there wasn’t even any of his things left behind."

The friend’s little sister was shocked.

"The way he died was so wretched it was funny. Even though it would be great if he could be useful for me at least, it was really a pointless death."

Lionel was cackling. His friend’s little sister slapped his face.

Lionel glared at her. His friend’s little sister then ran away from that place while spilling tears.

Lionel wasn’t particularly moved seeing that. The spectators at his surrounding were saying "What’s with this guy-""Unbelievable""Saying such horrible thing to the dead person’s relative" at him.

Lionel didn’t move. A knight who was giving instruction to the group approached him.

"Walk quickly. Don’t just stand there."

The knight only said that and left.

Lionel returned to the moving group and started walking. And then he resumed talking to himself.

"That’s right. Even though I had given them that rare chance, I failed because those guys were useless. I’m not wrong. I’m not wrong. I’m not wro—"

Shadows were formed under his eyes. He was obviously abnormal just from looking at him. None of the subjugation group member called out to him—.

.

The inn.

I who got into a bad shape from the pre-growth was in pain on the bed since the morning without being able to move.

"……I don’t want to move."

The words coming out from my mouth were all negative words.

Aria-san and Sophia-san were nursing me who was like that.

"Lyle, you too have bad timing huh."

"Indeed. Even though the negotiation with Circry House will start after this……"

I’m really sorry that my timing is bad.

"I’m sorry. I’m sorry for this hopeless Lyle. I’m the hopeless Lyle. Abbreviated it’s Hopelessyle."

Sophia-san looked troubled.

"This is……a serious one."

"Is that so? Lyle’s pre-growth was always like this wasn’t it? More importantly, I’ll wipe your body so lift up your upper body."

The two forcefully lifted up my upper body and wiped me.

"……It’s cold. It’s chilly. I’m freezing."

Sophia-san replied seriously.

"You aren’t freezing so it’s fine."

Seeing me who was doing nothing but complaining, Aria-san said "Alright. That’s why we’ll quickly finish it okay?" to me.

They wiped my body using towel that was soaked in hot water, but the inside of the room was cold that I felt chilly from the spot that was wet.

I looked around.

"……Where is everyone?"

Aria-san wiped my feet while telling me.

"Novem brought Eva and Clara to give greeting to the elf big-wigs. Miranda is shopping with Shannon. That Monica also accompany them as guard and carrying their purchase."

Sophia-san was making a tired face.

"She was throwing a tantrum saying that she couldn’t leave Lyle-dono’s side. It was troubling."

Aria-san sighed.

"It would be alright even if Monica stay behind though. But Novem pushed saying that it would be good sometimes for us to be the one staying at your side."

The two finished wiping my body, dressed me up, and then let me slept.

It was comfortable that I didn't need to pay attention to Monica, but it seemed the two of them was taking care of me due to Novem's instruction.

……I wondered just what she was thinking?

The ancestors inside the Jewel were energetic too today.

By turn starting from the Third,

[She might want to make them do various jobs. Well, I think that's alright.]

[That's not a wrong thing to do.]

[Even so, they've become reliable compared to before.]

[You mean Aria and Sophia? As expected they'll grow up if there is one year of time.]

[One year……it will soon become one year since we traveled together with Lyle huh.]

When the winter passed and spring came—it would be one year since I was driven out from Walt House.

There were various things that happened in this one year.

Aria-san went out of the room to clean up the bucket that was filled with hot water. Sophia-san was sitting on a chair and reached out toward a book she was reading.

I could hear the sound of Sophia-san flipping the pages.

At the beginning, Sophia-san would be nervous when staying in a room with only me. Right now she could stay calm while reading book.

The time passed quietly for a while before Aria-san returned and said to us.

"The outside is getting colder. Perhaps it will snow soon."

Sophia-san felt nostalgic of the past hearing about snow.

"Snow is it? It was fun when snow fell at my childhood. When I grew bigger, snow caused the work to increase so I became unable to feel happy about it."

Aria-san also agreed while lying down on the sofa.

"It’s dangerous with the ground freezing. The surrounding surface became pure white. Every year I’d hear about people falling into a river or into a hole."

The winter was dangerous also because of this.

If you walked in an unfamiliar area, you could slip and fell into river—the river at winter was really dangerous.

I was listening to the two of them talking quietly.

Aria-san was also feeling nostalgic at the childhood that she spent in the capital.

"I would make a snowman. It would be muddy and dirty, then it immediately got destroyed I cried."

Sophia-san also seemed to recall something.

"My house was in countryside, so there was also a lot of snow and it was fun playing with that. But, it was really hard work clearing the snow."

Because the territory that Walt House governed was located at the south, the snow wouldn’t fall until forming a large pile.

The two’s story felt fresh for me.

……I had no memory of playing with snow.

I could only remember my memory around when I was ten years old. I didn’t know what I was doing before that.

Did I also play with snow?

I closed my eyes while listening to the two’s story.

The past me……just what kind of person I was? According to my grandfather the Seventh, it seemed I was talented and also loved by my family.

I was suddenly treated coldly when I was ten years old felt unnatural for the Seventh too.

Could it be that there was the answer within the memory that I forgot?

—Novem was taking together with her Clara who had been locking herself inside her room since coming to the capital. They were walking toward the haunt of the elves.

It was a place for the organization where elves who were performing their art in the capital and the traveling performer elves would help each other—a guild.

Eva was guiding them through the guild’s building that was located in a complicated spot.

"Clara, get a hold of yourself already."

Eva was exasperated with Clara who was still looking dejected even now.

"……When, I still hadn’t lost my left arm, I belonged to a certain party. No, I was trying to join that party. It was a comfortable party. But, at my post-growth I became badmouthed and then I got expelled."

She talked about her experience of getting expelled from a party in the academy city Arumsaas.

With that Novem understood why she was going solo despite being a capable adventurer.

"We don’t mind. Lyle-sama is also not concerned about it. We won’t expel Clara-san because of that."

Clara was looking apologetic.

"I’m glad to hear that. Thinking back, because such thing happened, I thought that going solo was more comfortable."

Eva teased her.

"Oh, that mean right now you’re having more fun than when being solo. Well, you’re strangely obstinate, so it must also be difficult to search for a party where you can do well."

Clara pouted and retorted back to Eva.

"My only problem is my post-growth, I was evaluated highly other than that……I believe. More importantly, you yourself were wandering aimlessly between traveling troupes while traveling alone."

Eva was brazen.

"I was alone for my own objective. I’m not like you."

The two glared at each other. Novem was exasperated seeing them.

"Please get along better with each other."

Eva brushed up her hair.

"I'll get along with her if it's as a party member."

Clara averted her gaze from Eva.

"……I'll carry out the role that I'm given."

Novem was worried about the two's bad relationship and so she tried walking outside together with them like this. She let out a sigh.

(Like this it'll be better if I put some distance from this problem.)

Eva walked forward through the gloomy alley with practiced footsteps and before long she pointed at a building where elves were coming and going from.

"Novem, here we are!"

Eva was high spirited. Unlike her attitude toward Clara, she was kind toward Novem.

Clara muttered "She is like a dog wagging her tail".

Eva ignored her and opened the guild's door.

Then, they found an unexpected person there—.

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—Miranda was shopping.

Monica who was carrying the baggage kept complaining since some time ago.

"I can't exert any strength without chicken dickwad here. I also can't find any motivation. I can't be energetic. I want to go back~"

She was carrying a lot of baggage lightly while making a composed expression.

Shannon seemed to enjoy shopping. Her eyes were sparkling.

Both her hands were carrying the sweets that she asked Miranda to buy for her while looking around restlessly.

"Monica, you're annoying. Onee-sama, let's ignore her and go somewhere else next!"

Shannon was itching to go to the next shop quickly. Miranda responded to her with a smile.

"Too bad. The shop just now was the last."

"Ee~"

Unlike the dissatisfied Shannon, Monica started to look happy.

"Then, let's go back to the inn and I'll nurse chicken dickwad. The two who're staying behind in the inn are surely unable to perform any satisfactory service. Chicken dickwad is surely waiting for my return while crying."

Shannon replied calmly.

"That guy isn't thinking that far. He must be sleeping around this time."

"Please don't make fun of my bond with chicken dickwad! Even while I'm outside like this, chicken dickwad is crying while thinking about me. This Monica know it!"

Miranda thought.

(It's troubling because I don't know if she is joking or not. Automaton is really troublesome.)

Monica could lie, but sometimes she would also speak the truth.

Monica who could realize absurd things was someone who even Miranda found hard to measure.

The humanoid automaton created by the ancient people……it was a fact that there was a line between her and Lyle that was created from mana.

It wouldn’t be wrong even if they called the two being tied with invisible string.

But, she really couldn’t picture Lyle crying because Monica wasn’t at his side.

(……She is lying just now.)

Miranda who found the answer inside herself led the two to return back to the inn.

The dissatisfied Shannon was at the middle, Miranda was at the front, and Monica was walking at the rear.

They could hear the talking voices of the people walking around them.

"Did you hear? It seems it’ll be soon."

"As I thought it will be announced at spring."

"I’m looking forward to it."

Miranda was listening to the aunties who were talking while standing. She thought that it was a normal sight that could be found anywhere while paying attention to the surrounding.

(……So they came.)

The expression of Monica who was looking happy was gradually vanishing.

"Do you notice?"

Monica talked to Miranda. Miranda nodded and replied.

"Good grief, what troublesome people."

She said that and intentionally stepped into an empty alley.

Shannon tilted her head.

"Onee-sama, this isn’t the right path."

Miranda lightly ficked the forehead of Shannon who didn’t notice and answered.

She explained to Shannon who didn’t understand what was going on.

"Shannon, no matter how great the ability that you have, it’s meaningless if you can’t use it well. Please at least realize when you’re being followed."

Shannon hurriedly made her eyes to shine gold and looked around restlessly.

Monica put down her baggage and took out her weapon while taking a stance.

Miranda kept carrying her baggage while coming to a stop and turned around.

"Now, come out. I intentionally came to a place without any other people, so isn’t it alright for you to show yourself?"

An alley that didn’t have anyone else.

Human silhouettes appeared as though to pincer Miranda and others.

One of them was the man who worked as Circry House's butler—Renald.

He was wearing a coat and a hat with a cane in one hand.

"Miranda-ojousama, you have grown a lot."

Miranda recalled her "post-growth" blunder. Her expression slightly clouded but, she realized that Renard had no ill intention and was honestly praising her, so she spoke her thanks.

"Thank you. I'm happy to receive your praise. ……And? Do you come to kill us?"

Shannon was scared hearing Miranda's line and couldn't move. Her legs were trembling.

Miranda and Monica took position to protect Shannon.

Renard shook his head and spoke to solve Miranda's misunderstanding.

"Miranda-ojousama, please hand over the griffon's corpse to us without saying anything and return to Circry House. That's the way to finish this peacefully."

Miranda chuckled.

"That piece of shit father is really pathetic. It's because she tried to put a trap, the when it failed he hover around to target Lyle's life. Do you have the job of cleaning up the mess this time pushed on you?"

Miranda had seen through their intention to take revenge after the name of Circry House got splattered with mud.

……It was something really pathetic for Miranda.

"He is really a stupid person. In the past he was more respectable."

When the mother of Miranda and Shannon was alive, their father was kind and reliable.

That memory was making Miranda excessively aggravated.

Renard deeply pulled his hat over his head to hide his eyes.

"We come today to give a warning. At this rate, we'll have to—"

"—Renard, when you get back tell this to that pathetic man. Lyle wants to have a talk. He will prepare a place for the negotiation. Tell that man so that he'll come."

Miranda said that and started walking away.

Monica collected her baggage and carried Shannon under her arm.

Renard and his men opened a path for them to pass.

When they passed each other, Renald was.

"You have really grown to be just like your great grandmother."

"Thank you."

Renard said that with a small smile. Miranda said her thanks and they returned to the inn—.

Chapter 79 – Stark Naked

—The mansion of Circry House.

Ralph Circry who listened to Renald's report made a slightly haggard face.

He was busy these several days and didn't even have time to sleep.

"He is saying he'll negotiate with the head of a viscount house? That brat is really conceited."

Ralph's tone turned rough from his dissatisfaction toward Lyle. He was losing composure from fatigue, irritation, and various other things.

Renard asked Ralph with a serious expression.

"……Master, what are you going to do?"

"Hmph! I'll accept it. Kill Lyle at that place. That Miranda will also become slightly obedient after that."

Renard shook his head.

"She is similar with Milleia-sama not just in appearance but also in temperament. If we're careless, we won't get away with just having our hand bitten. Besides, according to the rumor the one who defeated the griffon was that youngster called Lyle. Unfortunately, even the best among us is unable to defeat a griffon."

The retainers of Circry House were used to rough matter, but it would be hard to face someone who was ready for them.

"Are you telling me to lower my head toward that brat?"

Renard nodded at Ralph’s question.

"Master, more than this will be piling up even more shame on top of shame. I don’t say that we can’t win. But, if we fight then we’ll also receive considerable damage."

Hearing Renald going that far, Ralph was listening to him even while feeling irritated but,

"……Tell them that I’ll negotiate. But, don’t let that brat alive if he’s making light of us."

"Yes!"

When Renald replied that, Ralph recalled the other male of Walt House.

"What about the other brat?"

Hearing that question, Renald immediately guessed that it was about Lionel and started reporting—.

—Lionel’s house.

There, it was also the house that gave birth to Basil Walt, the ancestor of the feudal lord noble Walt House.

It was a really ancient house. The house was worn-out. It had been repeatedly rebuilt and repaired.

Even now the Walt House that was a capital noble was using this house.

The second daughter of Circry House, Doris brought herself to such place.

She heard that Lionel had returned and hurriedly rushed here but…….

"Lies. You’re lying."

"It’s not a lie. When I called out to you and learned that you’re rich, I went out with you. That’s all. It’s not like I like you, I was lying that I love you. I just wanted the status and riches that Circry House had."

Lionel was laughing. He exposed his true feeling toward Doris.

Doris was feeling so painful it was hard to even stand.

"E, even so, Lionel, toward you I!"

Doris tried to say that she liked him even then, and yet Lionel replied with a loud laughter.

"This is why an ignorant and pampered girl is no good. Even if I marry with you, if I can’t inherit the viscount house then it’s meaningless. ……I hate your father who completely tricked me and also you his daughter. Don’t show yourself anymore in front of me!"

"Wait. Wait, Lionel!"

"……There is worthier place for me. Yeah, if that guy can obtain everything, then even I should also be capable to obtain everything."

Lionel said that and turned his back to Doris whose had reached out toward him, but Lionel didn’t turn around and entered the house—.

How many days since I was lying on bed due to my poor health?

The letter from Ralph-san came to me whose body was still heavy and passing through the painful days.

"Looks like they accept the negotiation offer. However, they specified the time and place. The letter also said to come without forgetting to bring the griffon too."

Miranda-san reported to me while reading the letter. I didn’t get out of the blanket and only turned my gaze toward her.

Inside the room of the inn.

The Seventh inside the Jewel showed his displeasure toward that letter.

[Looks like he doesn’t understand his position. Don’t you think that this needs a little harsh education?]

The Seventh asked for agreement from his surrounding. The Fourth was calm on the contrary.

[Lyle has defeated a griffon after all. They must be wary. But, it’s out of question. There is no need to rush into a place that is trapped.]

The place and time were specified meant that Ralph-san had laid out trap at that place. He must have positioned his subordinates to attack us.

There might also be other trap that he prepared.

……Troublesome.

Miranda-san waved around the letter while asking my opinion.

"What’re we going to do? This is definitely a trap."

I spoke shortly.

"……I don’t want to go."

Novem nodded hearing my words.

"We will be the one to decide the time and place."

Miranda-san seemed to agree with that opinion too.

"As expected right now is impossible. Lyle is also not in a good shape."

With me in a bad shape like this, the two of them were the one who mainly acted.

I was feeling really guilty.

Clara-san was also inside the room.

She looked at the letter that Miranda-san was holding while tilting her head.

"Why is the palace demanding the griffon? I don’t think that the palace will want its material."

It seemed she didn’t understand the reason why Ralph-san and his collaborators were fixated at the griffon.

……Thinking carefully I also didn’t understand.

I looked toward Novem,

"……Novem."

When I called her name, Novem guessed my intention and smiled while teaching the answer.

"Those who can defeat monster like griffon and dragon will be called hero. For a noble, that is more important rather than the material. They want to stuff the corpse as decoration. It can even be used as present between fellow feudal lord."

Present? I wouldn’t be happy even if I received something like that.

The Third added to the explanation while I was thinking that.

[Perhaps Lyle won't want something like that, but even if it's called a present it's not a type of present to simply please the other party. It's to show off to the other party that they have this much asset to purchase it or they are able to defeat monster this strong. Griffon and dragon are popular in that kind of sense.]

……Being noble was really troublesome.

It wasn't related with me anymore but, I thought that it was tiresome to demand various meaning from a single present.

Miranda-san was exasperated.

"That's really popular among the feudal lord nobles. Even among the capital nobles there are some who use those as decoration but, there are a lot more with strong craving for the limelight. They're show off who want to make themselves look big."

It seemed there was also difference in regard to present between feudal lord noble and capital noble.

The Seventh was hurt by Miranda-san's words.

[……I, I, I was just stuffing the monsters that I defeated myself.]

The Seventh who loved stuffed animal was teased by the other ancestors.

The Sixth was especially terrible.

[Aa~, you have that kind of side since the past aren't you? You're a vain person.]

The Third was also laughing.

[Sometimes there are nobles who like decorating their room with various stuffed animal, from animal to monster. I see~, so the Seventh is the same with that kind of people.]

It seemed the other ancestors didn't have any fixation toward stuffed animal.

The Fifth was,

[……Stuffed animal is the worst. I don't understand why they would intentionally stuff the remains of those cute animals.]

The Fifth who loved cute animal seemed unable to accept such hobby.

The Seventh was criticized by his surrounding and his voice grew smaller.

[Don't complain at other people's hobby.]

The Fourth paid it no mind and thought about the reason why Ralph-san was demanding the griffon.

[I already thought they would show interest but, like this they're really fixated to it. Do they want to secure it for exchange of presents?]

Even if they themselves weren't interested to it, they wanted to secure it as present.

Because of that, the griffon that was defeated by the subjugation force was necessary?

That was the Fourth's hypothesis.

The Third was agreeing.

[Perhaps they want to use it as present for a feudal lord noble. They must want to boast, *this is the griffon that our knights defeated you know~,* like that.]

The Fourth didn't show any interest for stuffed animal, but the Third's words made him to start speaking in excitement.

[That's nice. If they want the griffon that much, then I can see how we should go about it. Seems like we'll be able to extort Ralph-kun.]

I handed out a lot of gold coins when subjugating the griffon.

The Fourth wanted to make up for that loss and began to design some scheme.

Miranda-san who couldn't hear the conversation inside the Jewel felt puzzled at Ralph-san who wanted the griffon.

"It's strange that pathetic man want a griffon. He shouldn't have any interest for stuffed animal or monster parts."

Clara-san also felt the same.

"Is it for present exchange? But, if that's the case then the palace can just make a request to the adventurer guild. It should be fine even if they don't obtain the one in Lyle-san's hand."

Novem thought just for a bit and reached the same answer with the ancestors.

"No, if it's for present exchange, then it'll be meaningful it it's a griffon defeated by the capital's subjugation force. The present might be for a feudal lord noble with high status."

Perhaps they wanted to hurry in securing the present for duke, count, or noble with vast territory—anyway, it might be for feudal lord noble with rank that would be faster to be counted from above.

That was the conclusion that we formed.

……No, I was the only one who wasn’t thinking. It was a conclusion that was created by everyone other than me.

Miranda-san looked at the letter.

"Let’s reply that we’ll be the one to decide the day and negotiation place."

Clara-san looked slightly axious.

"This is Miranda-san’s house but, will it be alright to negotiate with noble as the other party?"

Miranda-san smiled a little bit mysteriously.

"Noble is also dealing in a business of honor. They will be angry if their house name is shamed, so they might want to take revenge to us. That’s why……we can just crush them without reservation."

Miranda-san who could speak about crushing her own house was reliable but slightly scary.

Novem looked at me.

"Well, everything can only begin after Lyle-sama get better."

Novem made a slightly troubled face. Clara-san also agreed with her.

"……It’ll also be better to avoid doing it right after the growth. I’ve only heard about it but, I think it’ll be better to not show something like that in public."

Clara-san sent me a gaze of sympathy.

Miranda-san was also merciless.

"That tension cannot be shown in the open."

Even I didn’t want to come out in public post-growth.

I wrapped myself under the blanket and went to sleep so I wouldn’t see the three’s gazes.

Miranda-san was chuckling.

"Ah, he is sulking."

—In a room of the palace.

Norma’s adjutant Morris looked at the medal he received.

Originally he should be happy with this but, Morris couldn’t honestly feel happy and sighed.

"So I’m promoted to ten-man knight leader."

He was honestly happy that was promoted.

His house’s rank also increased.

His family was also really happy but…….

"What are you looking dejected for. This is why you’re no good. You should look happier honestly."

Norma who was promoted to be a hundred-man knight leader was looking very happy while placing her medal on her chest to show it off.

Morris was envious toward such Norma.

"Commander, we are promoted but, we still haven’t received the reward."

"You’re worried about such thing? They must be discussing what reward is suitable for the griffon subjugation. Perhaps, the superiors

are quarreling about who will obtain the capable me as their subordinate."

Norma was having wild imagination of the superiors quarreling to obtain her. Morris was exasperated seeing her.

(I think it'll be better if you realize that you are hated by your fellow knights.)

Norma who obtained achievement that was beyond her means and earned promotion was in a good mood.

Apparently she had forgotten the loathing expression of the palace nobles that were welcoming them who returned back safely.

"You seem happy."

Morris said in sarcasm. Norma replied with a laugh.

"Of course! At this rate I'll undoubtedly be in a course of success. Even the position of a thousand-man knight leader will immediately enter within my reach."

Norma believed that her future was bright without a doubt. In contrast Morris was pessimistic.

A civil official came toward the two who were in such state.

"Norma Arnette-dono, Morris Usher–dono. Come over here."

Norma replied cheerfully.

"Umu! It seems that our reward has been decided."

The civil official formed a meaningful smile.

"Yes, the minister will talk about the matter of reward with the two of you directly. It's great isn't it?"

Morris got a bad premonition, but Norma was laughing.

"I see! The minister will directly talk to us!"

Morris thought.

(A minister will directly talk about the reward to a knight of our rank? I only get bad premonition from this.)

Normally, the official who talked to Morris and Norma about their reward would be someone with lower position.

Morris's bad premonition was swelling up—.

—The minister's office.

Inside there was Ralph and someone from the same faction……the count who acted as mediator.

The minister was smiling widely while looking at Norma and Morris.

Norma who heard about the reward's detail was dumbfounded with her mouth wide open.

"I'm really happy you're that delighted about the reward."

The minister's words made Norma gasped and returned to her senses. She then complained.

"Ple, please wait a second! Why am I getting demoted!?"

The minister answered with a smile at the word demotion.

"Demotion? I'll ask you to not say such stupid things. Since the ancient time, granting land as reward is a splendid recompense. The kingdom is also holding expectation for your work, because of that the royalty cede a part of the area under their direct control to the

both of you. From here on the two of you are feudal lord noble. This is a great promotion."

For Norma who was aiming for a success in the palace, becoming a feudal lord noble was the same like a demotion.

Morris was hanging his head down.

Seeing Morris was useless, Norma begged at the minister.

"Minister, I want to be promoted in the palace. Receiving a rural area—furthermore a detached area that is far away from the kingdom’s directly controlled area doesn’t make me happy at all!"

There was the area called detached area among the areas that the kingdom directly controlled. It was far away from the kingdom’s territory and an inconvenient place that was surrounded by feudal lord nobles.

There were various reasons but, such area had a lot of trouble.

Perhaps, the income was few, and no one would accept to receive that area.

"You don’t need to worry. Your income is definitely increasing."

"Ho, however!"

Because feudal lord received tax from the populace, their income was bigger than capital noble working in the palace.

Although, the territories that were granted to the two were located at rural area.

The two who were raised in a metropolis would be troubled if they were sent to the rural area even if their income increased.

If she could speak frankly, she wanted her income to increase while living in the capital.

"I beg you. Please rethink that reward again!"

"……Hou? You want to throw mud at his majesty’s face?"

The reward was given from the king. Norma whose status didn’t allow her to make any opinion regarding the matter of reward couldn’t say something like she didn’t want to accept it no matter what.

Norma fell on her knees.

Seeing that, the minister showed a nasty smile.

"You’re the hero who accomplished the griffon subjugation. Surely even if you become a feudal lord you will show us great achievement. I have great hope toward both of you."

From the minister’s standpoint, he made them promoted and also granting them the reward of territory.

He granted them reward in visible form while also able to deal with the troublesome detached area.

"Our business is finished."

He made a face that was satisfied with the result and ordered Norma and Morris to leave his office—.

.

"—I wonder, why is a human like me is so sinful like this."

I who was looking at the mirror inside the room realized that my handsomeness was a sin.

I understood.

……I am handsome.

I tried making a pose in front of the mirror while naked above the waist.

No matter what kind of pose I made, I was scared by my handsome self.

"Aa, magnificent!"

Even the blue sky that appeared after so long felt like it was giving its blessing to me. No, that wasn’t it—it wasn’t just my feeling, it was really blessing me.

I opened the inn’s room—the window and yelled loudly.

"Everyone, look at this handsome me—!"

Perhaps because cold air was entering the room, Sophia-san pinioned me from behind in great panic and covered my mouth.

Aria-san hurriedly closed the window and glared at me while breathing heavily.

"What in the world are you doing!?"

It seemed Aria-san was angry, but my mouth was covered so I could only answer with muffled voice. I tried licking Sophia-san’s hand.

"Hyah! Ple, please don’t lick!"

Sophia-san was shocked and let me go. I winked at her.

"You’re cute, Sophia-chan."

"Chan!? Lyle-dono, please get a hold of yourself!"

Sophia-san who was blushing red from embarrassment was cute.

"I have a good hold on myself. Rather, it feels like I am reborn. If it’s now, I can fly in the sky by myself! Should I prove it?"

I moved to open the window, but Aria-san stood in my way.

"I won’t let you! Or rather, this is third floor! What are you going to do if you jump down and get injured!? There’s an important negotiation today remember!"

That’s right.

There would be an important negotiation today.

I brushed back my hair with my hand.

"Leave it to me. I’m good at negotiation."

"……Just why is it today. Even though usually it would be yesterday or even before that."

Aria-san covered her face with both hands and resented that the negotiation would be happening today.

Sophia-san was also looking embarrassed while muttering.

"If it’s like this, Lyle-dono who is still in a bad health will still be a better choice."

She liked the weakened me better?]

"Both of you, it’s not admirable to look me inside the room because you want to monopolize me. For you see—I’m everyone’s Lyle after all."

Aria-san looked at me and wiped her tear while averting her gaze.

"……Lyle, it’s fine. After all I won’t blame you or anything for this. I’ll forget what happen today for you."

Sophia-san also agreed.

"Lyle-dono, I will endure this whole day. Let’s stay in this room quietly okay?"

It seemed the two wanted to spend time together with me.

"As I thought I’m really a sinful man. I made two girls to go mad for me."

The two covered their faces and wouldn’t look at me.

[Lyle is really amazing.]

[Genius.]

[This guy, he is really funny.]

[It’s the best watching him.]

[Aa, Lyle……you’re the one and only child prodigy of Walt House. There isn’t any outstanding talent better than you in making us laugh.]

Loud guffaws could be heard from the Jewel. I muttered.

"You guys make me bashful. Don’t be shy, you all can praise me more."

The Third was laughing.

[Mr. Lyle, you’re the best! I want you to leave behind a lot of silly saying. Haha~, I can’t help but looking forward to tomorrow. Furthermore it’s this timing.]

The Fourth was a bit troubled.

[It will be an important negotiation, will it be alright? At this rate it’s worrying whether it would be fine to leave it to Lyle.]

The Third was having fun.

[No, rather I’m now looking forward at how Mr. Lyle will get through this situation. Let’s watch how everything unfold with the readiness of accepting some loss.]

The Sixth was heartily laughing.

[What a show! This might be even more fun than the average comedy.]

It was great that the ancestors inside the Jewel seemed to have fun too.

However, wasn’t it a sin not to spread my existence in the society?

I wanted to show the existence of me in even a lot more people.

"Yosh! ……Let’s go outside."

When I moved to go outside, Sophia-san ran to the front of the door and spread out both her hands in a stance of not letting me go.

"Sophia-san, move aside! Everyone is—the world is in need of me!"

"No way! What Lyle-dono need right now is only this isolated room! There is no way I can let you widen the wound of your heart more than this!"

While she was making ruckus, the door opened.

There Monica and Shannon were standing.

"Chicken dickwad~, I bring breakfast!"

"Uwaa~, I saw a terrible sight since the morning. Wear clothes at least. Aren’t you embarrassed?"

The happy looking Monica and Shannon who frowned seeing my upper body and displayed her disgust……damn it, certainly this was embarrassing.

"Oops, forgive my rudeness."

"It’s good if you understand. You’re an idiot in your post-growth but, aren’t you actually obedient. I’m seeing you in a more positive light just for a—OIIIII!"

Shannon started to praise me, but she suddenly started shrieking when she saw me.

"What?"

"Why are you starting to strip your lower body!?"

"Eh?"

What was this girl saying? Shannon couldn’t hide her surprise and shook her head.

"No, I don’t understand why are you making a face that say [What are you saying?] at me. Are you, planning to get naked in front of us?"

"That’s right, so?"

"You’re impossible!"

"Why? You were disgusted because I was just half-naked right? I too think that the balance is bad when I’m only naked at my upper body. That’s right, there is no best clothes for me other than being stark naked after all. My bad, I’ll show it right now to make up for it."

"There is no way I’ll have any interest at all in your naked body! DON’T STRIIIIPP!"

Shannon became teary eyed.

Did she want to look at my naked body that much? I had to hurry and strip!

I took off my trouser and then my hands reached at my trunks. It was tehn Aria-san and Sophia-san who stiffened from surprise started moving.

"I won’t let you!"

"You mustn’t strip! It’s just no good!"

The two of them pressed me down and I fell on the floor.

"Le, let go! Shannon wants to look at my naked body!"

"Don’t screw around! No one want to look at your shabby thing!"

"Shabby you say!? Have you seen it before!? I’ll have you stop spreading lies! I get it, then everyone, check it out. Whether my thing is shabby or not! Everyone look at my great sword!"

I desperately tried to strip, but Aria-san held me down.

"I won’t let you! Monica, you help out too!"

Monica was blushing watching me.

"I don’t want. I’m interested at chicken dickwad’s chicken dickwad. Even if it’s a short sword, it’ll still be the supreme sword for me."

I resisted Sophia-san’s strength while lowering my trunks slightly.

"Fuh, I’ll immediately display it. More importantly, both of you, don’t get in my way. Shannon, you too, don’t just watch, help me out."

Shannon who was hiding her face with both hands wasn’t looking this way.

She was bright red until her ears.

"Don’t talk to me, you pervert!"

"You’re wrong! I’m decent! It’s everyone else than me who is pervert!"

I resisted Aria-san and Sophia-san while lowering my trunks.

But, the two of them were tough. They had also just grew and became really strong.

Sweat was coming out. Aria-san and Sophia-san were also sweating from their effort to put on clothes on me.

"Don’t resist! Oy, you won’t get away!"

"Lyle-dono, it’ll end soon so don’t struggle!"

I couldn’t yield against the two—I was determined inside my heart to become naked and wrung out my last strength.

"I’M NOT GOING TO LOSEEEEE!"

The two girls grabbed my trunks and hindered me from taking it off. Their bodies were hanging over me.

I went against that and desperately tried to strip. There new silhouettes appeared in front of the door.

"Novem! Miranda-san! Both of you, help me!"

Novem and Miranda-san were watching us expressionlessly.

Aria-san was relieved.

"Great. Both of you, stop Lyle—eh?"

Novem grabbed Aria-san’s shoulder.

Miranda-san gripped Sophia-san’s arm.

"Why are you holding me?"

Sophia-san was bewildered. Mirnada-san sent her a cold gaze.

"Sophia, I believed in you, and yet you disappoint me."

"Eh? Eeeee!? Why is that!? Ah, no good. Lyle-dono escape!"

Borrowing Novem and Miranda-san’s help, I escaped from Aria-san and Sophia-san by rolling on the floor and took my distance.

"I got away!"

Aria-san was being held back by Novem.

"Just why are you holding me back!?"

"Aria-san, it seems that I overestimated you. For you to push down Lyle-sama—I absolutely won’t forgive you."

"No-! I didn’t push him down! Lyle was—"

Novem’s expressionless face and her emotionless voice slightly made my spine felt chill.

But, I stripped my trunks.

The sound *whoosh” echoed slightly inside the noisy room.

The trunks fluttered in the air. When it fell on the ground, I stood up and spread out my hands. Sunlight was shining in from the window and illuminated me from behind.

"Now, everyone look at me!"

Novem looked at me and her face reddened,

"Ly, Lyle-sama? What are you—"

"Getting stark naked!"

Aria-san was crying.

"That’s why we pressed him down! Lyle started stripping his clothes, that was why we tried making him wore clothes, that’s all!"

Miranda-san let go of Sophia-san and apologized.

"I’m sorry. It should be obvious if I just thought about it for a bit."

"N, no. We too were being misleading."

Monica was staring hard at me.

"Aren’t you ashamed chicken dickwad?"

"Is there anywhere embarrassing from my naked body? I even want to walk outside just like this."

"As expected from chicken dickwad! You'll do something that no ordinary person can imitate without batting an eyelid."

"Naturally. I'm special after all. Ahahaha!"

While I was laughing loudly, a towel was thrown at me.

Miranda-san was smiling at me.

"Lyle……wear clothes."

I noticed from her attitude that broke no argument.

"You don't want to show my naked body to other people?"

"……It will be hell for Lyle tomorrow."

I listened to the request of the sighing Miranda-san and reluctantly wrapped the towel around my waist.

.

Eva-san and Clara-san also entered the room when the situation calmed down.

Clara-san tilted her head seeing Aria-san and others looking exhausted.

Eva-san saw me and asked.

"Hey, why is Lyle only wearing bath towel around his waist?"

"Because I was told that completely naked is no good. But, do you want to see?"

I excitedly moved to take off the bath towel, but Novem caught my hand. There was creaking sound that normally a hand shouldn't make.

"Lyle-sama, the talk won’t progress like this so please restrain yourself."

"Ee~"

The Third was laughing at me who was making a displeased face.

[Somehow, the atmosphere this time is strange. Is it because of that? As expected they had gotten used to this so they could be calmer perhaps?]

The Fifth was holding back his laugh.

[He is more obedient than usual. I understand that he has confidence of his naked body but, this time the impact is insufficient.]

Eva-san shrugged and started talking for the time being.

"I gathered the information from my colleagues in the capital. The reason the palace wants the griffon is just like what Novem and everyone think. Apparently it’s for present, so they want a griffon that was defeated by themselves—the palace’s subjugation force."

I crossed my legs on the bed and placed my joined hands on my lap.

"Fumu, continue."

"Somehow that ruin my pace."

Eva-san was looking perplexed toward me unlike normal. I get it. I really get it. In my post-growth, I was so handsome that I myself was shocked when seeing myself.

Surely her heart was beating fast without a doubt. She looked slightly exasperated was surely because she was hiding her embarrassment.

"It seems they want to stuff the griffon and prepare it before an important guest come to the capital. There is also various other rumors, but the definite information is only this."

I understood the reason why Ralph-san was demanding the griffon.

Because he couldn’t find any other griffon and he also couldn’t take away the griffon from us, he was troubled.

As for Clara-san, it seemed she was unable to gather any particularly striking information.

But—.

"……Miranda-san, can I ask you one thing?"

"What is it?"

"I came from Arumsaas, so I’m not knowledgeable about the capital. Because of that, I don’t really feel it clearly but……there’s something that seem strange."

Everyone tilted their head at Clara-san’s vague talk.

Miranda-san shrugged.

"From my point of view, it’s Arumsaas that’s strange though. Is there something that bothering you?"

It seemed that Clara-san wasn’t confident because she had no definite proof. She hesitated to speak.

"Try saying it. I’ll accept everything of you Clara. Now, leap onto my chest! I’ll welcome you anytime!"

"……I’ll refrain from that."

She must be embarrassed to do it in front of everyone. Clara-san refused in reservation and began talking with "This is my personal impression but" as preamble.

"I feel that the citizens are strangely restless. It’s not everyone but, a lot of people looks like they’re waiting for something……it’s like the atmosphere before a festival."

Shannon immediately denied it when she heard the word festival.

"There isn’t any festival at this period of time. Aren’t you misunderstanding?"

Sophia-san was in agreement with Clara-san’s opinion.

"But, I understand her feeling. Because when we first came to the capital I also thought that the place is bustling with so many people and if there will be a festival."

She looked a bit happy that she and Clara-san were thinking the same thing.

"Is that so? It’ll be good if that’s not just my misunderstanding."

Eva-san looked at me.

"Ah, that’s right. Lyle, actually—"

"DAMIAAAAAN!"

"Oh, Lyle. The way you dress look really cold."

The male who looked like boy with short stature and holding a staff that looked imbalanced with his body was Damian Valle. He had unkempt brown hair and wearing glasses.

Normally he was wearing a lab coat, but today he was wearing a coat.

Behind him an automaton just like Monica named Lily was standing.

Unlike Monica, she was wearing a plain blue maid uniform.

She was an automaton with black hair and small self-assertion.

Damian who was visiting me didn’t look bothered by me wearing only a bath towel.

He only commented that it looked cold and that was it.

In the first place he was a scholar who was only interested at his research. He was the kind of genius that was lacking the worldly sense.

"This? Certainly it’s cold, but I think that my naked body should be displayed to even wider audience."

"Is that so?"

"By the way, why are you in the capital? Damian is a professor in Arumsaas aren’t you?"

"I exploded my research lab. I came here to purchase tools. I created a slightly larger Porter based on the blueprint you gave me, so the travel was easy. It really helped."

"I see. That’s awful."

While we were smiling at each other, Aria-san who was watching us from behind let out a surprised voice.

"Wait. Wait a second. You guys just jump over the matter of the lab exploding like it was nothing but, isn't that a really dangerous story?"

Lily-san nodded at Aria-san who said that.

"Yes. If I wasn't there, goshujin-sama's life would be lost. The building is also in a terrible state, so the headmaster got really angry."

Damian looked dissatisfied.

"The headmaster is really horrible."

Sophia-san shook her head.

"……Isn't it Professor Damian who is horrible?"

Monica looked at Lily-san and tsked. These two, for some reason they got bad relationship.

"Oh, isn't it Poyopoyo-san over there? Poyopoyo-san, long time no see. Is Poyopoyo-san who has funny name as usual in a good health?"

Lily-san mentioned Monica's previous name repeatedly as though making fun of her.

"I have received a splendid name of Monica right now! This is why the mass produced model is troubling. You're lacking style in the way you joke."

"……Don't get cocky just because you're the special model."

"I'll turn you into a scrap here!"

They both took out their weapon and readied themselves to fight. There I and Damian mediated between them.

"Monica, don’t fight."

"It’s annoying so shut up."

Both of them dropped their shoulders dejectedly and reluctantly put away their weapon. I watched them while asking Damian.

"By the way, what’s your business today? You don’t come here just to meet me right?"

"Ah, my business. Actually there is something that bothers me slightly."

What Damian spoke about was the abnormality that happened at the academy.

"A professor of the academy abandoned his teaching job and now he’s staying in the capital. The headmaster is enraged. When I said that I’m going to the capital, he insisted that I investigate it while I’m here."

Lily-san talked to me.

"Do you know anything? Even when we asked the well-informed elves, they said they don’t know and now we don’t have any way to investigate."

"An academy’s teacher did that? No, I don’t know anything."

When I looked at Eva-san, she shook her head.

"I know that a professor came here, but I don’t know as far as what his reason is."

I put my hand on my chin.

"……I smell a case."

Damian didn’t look interested.

"It’s troublesome and I don’t like it. Honestly, I also understand his feeling of wanting to abandon his teaching job. At this rate I also won’t go back to Arumsaas."

I felt apologetic of being unable to respond to Damian’s expectation, but if we obtained some kind of information we would contact him. I told him so and we parted there.

Chapter 80 – Negotiation

At a warehouse district in the capital.

There was a really battered warehouse. The inside was filled with trashes because right now it wasn’t used anymore.

Scrap woods were piled up and cold wind blew in from the cracks.

Miranda-san chose such place as the negotiation place. Perhaps she regretted it because her expression was dark.

"Miranda-san, such expression doesn’t suit you. Come on, please smile."

Shannon laughed at my line.

"You, you have been like this all the time since morning. Aren’t you ashamed?"

"No, not at all?"

Miranda-san put her hand on her cheek.

"I predicted wrongly. I can’t believe that it’s different from usual."

Firewood was put inside a large can and being used indoor heating.

We gathered around it.

Novem looked at my face with worry.

"Usually Lyle-sama will calm down at night, but this time his emotional uplift is still continuing."

I was in perfect form since the morning.

Aria-san looked at me while placing her hand over the fire.

"He is calmer than usual though. Perhaps this state continue longer in exchange of that. Lyle, really, why are you like this only at this kind of time."

Clara-san finished checking her artificial left arm and looked at me.

"Will the negotiation be alright?"

Eva-san put a blanket over herself while sending a doubting gaze at me.

"Lyle, do you understand the plan? You will be able to negotiate properly right?"

I smiled and assured Eva-san.

"Rest assured. I know no failure."

"I wonder where is that confidence come from. The usual Lyle is unreliable but, the current Lyle is only making us worried."

The Seventh's disappointed voice came.

[This time is also really funny but, I wish there'll be more impact.]

The Sixth was in agreement.

[Yeah, it's lacking. That naked scene was amusing though.]

It seemed that they were pleased by my naked body. But, it was troubling even if a man got interested to me. However, my naked body that led astray even man……good grief, I was really a sinful man.

I grasped the Jewel and stood up before looking back.

There was a frozen monster there.

The monster with “eagle head” that was put inside white ice within a wooden box could be seen vaguely.

No matter where you looked at it from, it was a griffon.

"……Everyone, it seems they arrived. They’re surrounding this warehouse. There are also some on the roof."

Sophia-san shouldered her battle axe, then everyone also held their weapon.

The warehouse’s door was opened and Ralph-san wearing a coat appeared.

Around him, there was his retainers for rough matter including Renald-san accompanying him.

Ralph-san’s voice echoed inside the warehouse.

"Here I am, brat."

I welcomed Ralph-san with a smile.

"We have been waiting. This is the “aforementioned thing”."

Ralph-san’s gaze turned sharp.

"You intentionally froze it?"

I nodded.

"The rotting was worsening, so we froze it. This way is also better for you isn’t it?"

"If you quickly hand it over then there would also be little problem. Oi."

One retainer came here and looked at the frozen monster. It seemed he was confirming the characteristic of each body part.

Before long he returned to Ralph-san’s side and started talking about something with a low voice.

……It was a tense moment.

I was looking cheerful without stopping from smiling.

Ralph-san nodded at his retainer’s report.

"Looks like there is no mistake."

"Naturally."

When I nodded, Ralph-san glared at me.

"Now then, for the deal. I prepared a hundred gold coins. Take it and leave the capital right away."

His attitude was really oppressive.

"You plan to purchase this with only a hundred gold coins? Looks like you really have a naïve thinking."

When I started talking with body and hand gestures, the Sixth spoke inside the Jewel.

[Good going, you’re in a better form than usual. Show your composure just like that!]

The Fifth was exasperated at the Fifth.

[……You are full of vigor at this kind of time huh.]

I stared fixedly at Ralph-san’s eyes while presenting my price.

"The price is a thousand gold coins. There is no use talking if I don’t receive at least that much."

Ralph-san’s wrath heightened.

Shannon hugged Miranda-san.

"Please don’t get angry. You make Shannon scared."

"……Aren’t you really spirited. You are telling me to pay that much money?"

"Of course."

"Two hundred gold coins. I won’t pay anymore than that."

"That’s troubling. Even though I was told it was hippogriff subjugation force, it was a griffon that came out. Thinking of your side’s miss, you should pay more in exchange. Nine hundred gold coins."

"I’ll recognize that it was our miss. But, we thought that it was a hippogriff at that time. Everyone can make mistake. Am I wrong? 250 gold coins."

"Do you think I don’t know anything? A person who sent away his daughter to die has a thick skin for a face. 850 gold coins."

The amount of money was gradually approaching near.

However, Ralph-san was the one who became unable to be patient first.

"……300 gold coins. I don’t have any free time to go along with your game more than this."

I showed a cheerful grin—.

"800 gold coins."

—When I told that, Ralph-san snapped his fingers as signal.

"—Erase them."

He was expressionless.

The retainers of Circry House leaped inside from the warehouse’s windows.

Several people broke through the warehouse’s roof and came in.

They were clad in black outfit and extinguished the fire first in order to slip into darkness.

However, that was within expectation.

"How short tempered!"

Aria-san quickly moved and took the consciousness of several people using thrusts with her spear’s butt.

Sophia-san lifted one hand and the remaining enemies who were approaching fell on their knee.

Ralph-san opened his eyes slightly wider and then said.

"Renald, go."

"—Yes-"

After he ordered the retired butler, Miranda-san threw a knife. Renald-san parried it with his cane and drew out a sword from there.

A hidden weapon.

The Seventh taught me.

[Lyle, aunt used pistol. The brat Renald is also secretly carrying one.]

I unsheathed my saber and blocked Renald-san’s attack.

I was slightly surprised by the sharp swordsmanship and heavy attack that was unthinkable from an old man. Without pause he slashed at me consecutively so I dealt with them all.

"Excellent skill."

"Nothing will come out even if you praise me."

When I swung my saber horizontally, Renald-san dodged with only the barest distance and then he slashed again.

Sophia-san was surprised.

"My Art isn’t working!?"

Sophia-san’s Art was an Art to change weight.

The first stage could change the weight of an object she touched.

The second stage could change the weight of objects around her.

Even though his weight should be so heavy he couldn’t stand, Renald-san’s face was composed.

"Young lady, Art is not omnipotent. You should learn that your Art’s effect is weak toward opponent of higher status."

He took distance from me and pointed his left hand toward me.

"Monica."

Monica immediately rushed between me and Renald-san. She lifted her large hammer as shield and there was a firing sound at the same time.

Renald-san didn’t panic and immediately moved into the next attack but—.

"Wha, what?"

Fluttering inside the warehouse was string. Furthermore it was a soft and light string that would be blown away if it was hit by air.

If it was touched, it would burn and vanish.

When it touched the body and burned, it would take away mana at the same time. It was a string created by Miranda-san's Art.

Renard-san immediately detected the danger and tried to get away, but his feet didn't move. Sticky string was set up on the floor.

Miranda-san stepped forward.

"Renald, my bad but I'll have you back down."

"Miranda-ojousama? Is that so, this is Miranda-ojousama's Art."

When Miranda-san waved her hand to the side, sticky string was produced from her hand and captured the retainers of Circry House.

They couldn't make any movement. They struggled to escape but couldn't slip out of the string.

Deeper inside the warehouse.

Porter's engine came to life and turned on the light that made the inside of the warehouse bright. Clara-san was sitting on the driver seat.

I sheathed my saber while,

"Is it over already? This is no good. There won't be any challenge unless you prepare double the number of people."

Ralph-san clenched his fist.

"A brat who's hiding behind women acting high and mighty."

"I can't say anything back to that."

I laughed and resumed the negotiation.

"Now then, the retainers of Circry House are hostages. Let’s use them as negotiation material too. How about 1000 gold coins?"

"Brat!"

"Oh, is that alright? It’s not like we have to sell the monster to you. Let’s see, should I negotiate with a different faction?"

Ralph-san gritted his teeth.

But, realizing that his retainers weren’t of any use, he immediately changed his policy.

"……The upper limit that I can prepare is 800 gold coins."

"That’s fewer than I thought. Well, fine I guess."

The Sixth spoke.

[We earn 200 gold coins more than expected. This brat, it’s obvious he is inexperienced at this kind of situation. This kind of type is common among civil official.]

The Fourth couldn’t stop laughing.

[800 coins! We obtained really good price!]

Ralph-san said.

"……The handing over of the money will be in my mansion."

"Yes, I don’t mind. Please prepare the correct amount of 800 gold coins."

Eva-san collected the weapons of the attackers.

Like that, the attackers were united and they were led outside by their colleagues hands.

—The warehouse’s entrance.

Ralph talked to Miranda who was on her guard.

"Miranda, do you intend to return?"

Miranda made a sharp gaze. Shannon beside her hugged her so she immediately let go of the weapon she was holding.

"I won’t return. ……You aren’t asking Shannon."

Ralph looked at Shannon.

However, his gaze immediately returned to Miranda.

Shannon strongly grasped at Miranda’s clothes and let out her tears.

"How about you say something?"

Ralph’s tone toward his daughter was cold.

"You are necessary for the house’s sake. If it’s necessary then I’ll also accept Shannon. If you wish for apology, then I’ll do it at the mansion just as you wish."

"Do you think I’ll say yes, I accept if you told me like that?"

Her father changed completely after her mother’s death.

Miranda was really frustrated of that.

"……Since Okaa-sama died, you became someone who only worked for the sake of the house. Once I was also worried for you. I thought that one day you would return to become that kind father again. And yet, you keep dragging it forever!"

Ralph smiled at Miranda as though to look down on her.

"You wanted me to be kind to you? You got caught with an outrageous man because of such reason huh. ……All of you will regret it. Killing me here might be better for that brat too."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Think about it yourself. I don’t know of anyone like you all anymore. Do as you please."

Shannon stifled her voice, but she couldn’t completely hold it and sniffed.

Ralph didn’t look back even once at his crying daughter.

Miranda hugged Shannon.

"Onee-sama, I……I……"

"I’m sorry, Shannon. It’s fine. I’m at your side."

There were footsteps rushing toward the two of them.

"I’ve listened to the situation!"

The one who appeared in front of the two with a pose was Lyle. He didn’t read the mood and smiled.

Even Miranda was troubled as expected.

"Lyle, give us a bit of time."

Shannon was also angry.

"Read the mood, you. Why are you smiling! Is it that funny seeing us getting abandoned!?"

Miranda and Shannon didn’t think that Lyle was making fun of them, but this was a delicate problem for them. They had no composure to smile even if they were told a joke.

Lyle spoke to the two of them.

"Don’t be stupid. You two aren’t abandoned."

In front of the two of them, Lyle lightly hit his chest with his fist.

"You have chosen this me—this Lyle Walt. You can feel proud. The man the two of you have chosen is me who will become the best man in the world after all!"

Shannon looked at Miranda’s face and pointed to Lyle.

"Onee-sama, are you really planning to go with this guy? I can only feel anxiety."

Miranda laughed.

"You’re right. He is worrying, that’s why we have to be the reliable one."

Shannon who stopped crying complained at Lyle.

"You, just when are you going to back to normal. Cut it out already, you’re annoying!"

"What? Are you embarrassed? What a cute fellow."

"I’m not embarrassed! There is a limit in even being presumptuous!"

"Presumptuous you say? You are wrong there, Shannon. I’m an amazing man, that is the truth. And then, I swear I’ll absolutely make you two happy. So just shut up and come with me."

Miranda looked at the posing Lyle while laughing.

"I’m looking forward to tomorrow. Lyle, I won’t forget what you just say for my whole life."

Lyle laughed loudly.

"Fuhahaha! No problem. This Lyle is a man who won’t say any lie."

Shannon’s face twisted and displayed her displeasure.

"No, you lied not long ago."

"Oi oi, did I lie even once? I didn’t say anything like [I’m selling a griffon] even once. That’s why it’s not a lie."

Miranda smiled slightly hearing that.

"Certainly you didn’t lie. Even so, today is cold isn’t it. —Oh?"

Snow fell from the sky that the three looked up to—.

—The next day.

Ralph and others were in the warehouse located inside Circry House’s mansion.

Ralph opened his eyes wide in front of the object he purchased.

The frozen monster wasn’t a griffon.

What came out from inside the melted ice was—a hippogriff.

It had the same eagle head and its appearance was really similar……the beheaded hippogriff was decorated like its legs that were wrapped with fur and so on to make it looked like a griffon.

Ralph was trembling with anger in front of the hippogriff—.

"Master, there is this thing"

Renald handed a wet paper to him.

He roughly took it and read the content.

[It’s a hippogriff that your daughter defeated. Decorate it and show it off okay! Also……did you think it was a griffon? Too bad~]

Ralph crushed the paper in his fist. Renald shook his head toward him.

"I asked my subordinate that checked it. It seems he investigated a griffon’s characteristic from a book beforehand but, he never seen the real thing or the stuffed one before. This is the harmful effect of us specializing in facing human."

They were trained for fighting human. Because of that they were uninformed about monster.

There were also people who never seen monster before because they lived in the safe capital that was protected by wall.

Furthermore when it came to griffon that was almost never seen, most people would only ever see one in book.

"……THAT BRAATTTT!"

Ralph threw away the letter in rage, then Renald’s expression turned grim.

"Master, the youngster the young ladies chose is formidable."

Renald asked if they would still fight him even then. In response Ralph calmed his rough breathing and answered.

"No need. They won’t be able to move anyway."

The snow that was falling since yesterday was starting to pile up on the capital.

It also affected the transportation. Ralph had noticed that Lyle and others wouldn’t be able to leave from the capital for a while.

"They should enjoy their victory against me for now."

After saying that, Ralph left the warehouse and headed to his mansion.

Renald followed behind such Ralph—.

.

[You have chosen this me, wasn’t it?]

[He also said something like, I want you to look at my naked body more.]

[It was also amusing this time.]

[The impact was lacking but, we were able to enjoy it for longer time.]

[As expected from Walt House’s wonder child.]

At the inn.

I locked myself inside the room with a blanket over my body while trembling.

"……No. It wasn’t me. That thing wasn’t me!"

I exposed my naked body in front of everyone.

I got the feeling that was saying some kind of embarrassing things the whole time.

I didn’t know what kind of face I should make in front of everyone!

The Fifth was cold toward me.

[The truth won’t change no matter how strongly you deny it. Even so, even though it shouldn’t be strange even if you start getting a little used with the growth, your post-growth is still intense like usual.]

The Fifth’s words pierced my chest deeply. I wanted to just faint like this.

It was painful how the people around me were being considerate to me since the morning.

Miranda-san and Shannon were grinning at me. It felt like Clara-san was smiling with a little bit of relieve when looking at me. Surely she thought of me as her comrade.

"I’m not wrong. The tension post-growth is to blame."

While I was trying to convince myself like that, the Third spoke to me with a mean voice.

[Eh? Is it alright for you to say something like that? Certainly it was post-growth but, it’s the truth that you bothered everyone right? You got naked and said look at me, or saying I’ll make you all happy. ……I think it won’t be acceptable if you say that it’s a lie.]

Tears came out.

While I was suffering, the room’s door was opened. Even though it was locked, the lock was opened without any consideration and Monica entered.

"Chicken dickwad, I brought your afternoon snack."

"……I don’t need it."

Right now wasn’t the time for that.

Even though I was writhing in shame, Monica was looking happy.

"Geez, don’t be shy. Even so, this time was really great. I was able to record every inch of chicken dickwad’s naked body. Well, setting aside whether it is a great sword or not, I can say for sure that it’s not a short sword."

From inside the Jewel,

[……puh]

I could hear a voice that couldn’t hold back laughter and snorted.

Other than that,

[Great sword he said.]

[That’s too pretentious.]

[It wasn’t short sword, that’s the impression I got.]

[Lyle is still in his growth period. It will still grow from here.]

[It reminds me of Lyle when he was small.]

……It was so embarrassing I wanted to cry.

Or rather, my tears had spilled out.

"Please forget it."

When I pleaded, Monica spoke to me with a smile that was filled with compassion.

"Impossible. I absolutely won’t forget it. It’s Monica’s treasure."

"Don’t call someone’s naked body a treasure!"

"I won’t forget it for my whole life~"

Monica looked happy and began to dance there. In front of that, I covered myself under the blanket once more and rolled into a ball.

"GOD DAMMITTTTTT! Why am I the only one to go through something like this!"

Chapter 81 – Remlraudt's Miracle

Snow was falling and piling up on the capital.

There was also sunny day, but snow would fall right after that. Such weather was continuing.

There were also merchants at the first floor of the inn where we were staying. They were talking with troubled expression.

"We can't move like this."

"This year is cold after all. I've the feeling it will still continue to snow."

"Just be glad that it didn't start snowing while we are on the road."

It was terrible just from the snow falling.

We too wanted to get out of the capital, and yet we couldn't move.

Aria-san and Sophia-san opened the inn's door and showed themselves.

I approached the two.

"How was it?"

Aria-san shook her head while brushing off the snow on her clothes.

"No good. The road is buried with snow that it cannot be seen. We can see the outline of something like a road but, it's dangerous to travel on that."

The two who checked the situation outside for me were slightly shivering from the cold.

"The connecting coach also cannot move. The merchants near the gate also told us that it’s not recommended to go outside."

My shoulders dropped.

"So it’s impossible to depart."

I gave up that there was nothing to be done. There Clara-san came down from the second floor and came toward us.

"You two have just returned from outside? Then, please tell me if the shops are open or not."

Sophia-san answered with a smile.

"If it’s the bookstore then it’s open. A lot of the shops are operating normally. Everyone in the capital is hardworker."

Aria-san also told Clara-san.

"The food stalls aren’t open though. Are you going out?"

Clara-san gave a small nod.

"I’ve read all the books I have, so I’m thinking to purchase new one."

"Everything? You have nearly twenty books."

"There are thirty. Then, I’ll head outside for shopping."

She had read that many?

I was also surprised. Then Sophia-san called out to Clara-san who wanted to go out.

"It’s dangerous to go alone."

We had just finished the transaction with Ralph-san.

The Sixth was chuckling.

[That brat Ralph might think about taking revenge after all.]

It was strange to say this when I was the one tricking him but—it wouldn’t be strange even if he wanted payback.

We planned to leave the capital as soon as possible.

Because we couldn’t move due to the snow, even now we were on our guard against Ralph-san and avoided from acting alone.

When I looked at Aria-san and Sophia-san, the two of them looked like they didn’t want to go outside again.

I also considered calling someone but…….

"Then, I’ll go together with you."

Clara-san’s expression felt like it softened slightly.

"Thank you very much. Then, let’s go."

The person herself seemed to be in a good mood because we went to buy book.

The Third spoke.

[Clara-chan really like book. I want to try speaking with her once.]

I wondered if I would be able to introduce the ancestors one day. Thinking for a bit, I imagined that the surrounding surely wouldn’t believe it and gave up.

Even though the Third said something like wanting to talk, the ancestors had no intention to tell anyone about themselves other than to me.

……If they were going to vanish one day, then that would be unnecessary. I got the feeling that was what they thought.

.

We visited three bookstores before returning.

Because it was really cold, we stopped by at a café that looked warm.

Quite a lot of people were entering the café because it was snowing and they couldn’t endure the cold.

A couple were sitting on a nearby table face to face while holding each other’s hand and conversing.

"It will be soon."

"Hm? Ah, that talk huh."

The man seemed to recall another something else after "that talk" and started a different topic.

"It seems that person is still staying in the capital."

"She doesn’t know when to give up. As a fellow woman I think that’s improper."

"Isn’t that right."

I didn’t know what they were talking about, but it seemed they were talking about a woman.

I wasn’t interested so I drank my warm drink.

It was nice how my chilled body was gradually warming up, but it made me felt that going outside was bothersome.

Clara-san was sitting in front of me and reading a book since some time ago.

"Is it interesting?"

When I tried asking casually, Clara-san lifted her face and nodded slightly.

And then, she showed me the book’s title.

The title was written as [The Truth of Remlraudt].

There was a region called Remlraudt. In the past Bahnseim Kingdom won a war and obtained that region. It was near with Walt House’s territory.

"Is it a history book?"

Clara-san shook her head.

"The writing is about Remlraudt’s miracle. It’s a book that is published recently. I was told that it’s popular so I tried buying it. This isn’t unrelated with Lyle-san too you know?"

She said that the thick book was writing about the war that was called the miracle of Remlraudt.

It wasn’t about me, but about the war that my ancestor Sleigh Walt was involved with.

The Third ended up being called as the righteous general from that war and Walt House’s name was engraved in history.

However—.

[Remlraudt’s miraclee~? That’s not a miracle.]

—The person himself sounded really displeased.

Clara-san was talking with a bit of passion in her voice because it was about book that she loved.

"The author investigated about Remlraudt's miracle independently. At that time every country sought to expand their territory. It was an era of fierce fighting, so it's also popular as the warring states period. Various people investigated this period, but this book is especially interesting."

"Warring states period huh."

"It seems that Remlraudt's miracle was the war that ended such warring states period. The author wrote that there was great meaning in that battle."

Is that so, I thought, but the Third who lived in such period was showing a strange reaction.

[Certainly there was a lot of war, so it could be called as warring states period but……in the first place, Bahnseim Kingdom was in the wrong.]

……Eh?

The Fourth seemed like he also wasn't really knowledgeable about it. He got curious.

[Is that so?]

[Because, Remlraudt only reacted to the disaster that was befalling them. Even the reason the war started was horrible. After all it was a false accusation. Even us were appalled by it.]

Clara-san looked at me with a slightly embarrassed look.

"E, err……also, his majesty the king at that time and……Lyle-san’s honorable ancestor had a relationship that surpassed that of lord and retainer. That’s what written here."

"Eh?"

[Eh?]

My voice overlapped with the Third. Clara-san continued her story for me.

"Bahnseim Kingdom went with the tactic to surround and annihilate the opposition, in respond Remlraudt’s side carried out a counterattack to breakthrough at one point. At that time, Lyle-san’s honorable ancestor Sleigh Walt-san led few soldiers and charged into the enemy army. He bought time at the risk of his life in order to protect the main headquarter."

"Is that so? I didn’t know."

"……Even for a knight who swore loyalty to his majesty the king, it’s rare for someone to go that far. It seemed that there was also a lot of homosexuality among the knights and soldiers……that’s, at that time such thing was popular and seemed normal. That’s what is written here. That’s why, the author wondered if the two had that kind of relationship."

The Third was screaming even though the outside wouldn’t be able to hear his voice. The Third who normally was making fun of other people with a smile was spilling out his rage from the bottom of his heart.

[Me and that guy having relationship, THERE IS NO WAY THAT’S TRUEEEE! Stop it! I won’t forgive that kind of groundless rumor! Furthermore what does she mean by homosexuality was normal!?

Don’t screw around! Furthermore what’s with that lord and retainer thing huh!]

The enraged Third couldn’t talk calmly.

I ignored him and asked about the story from Clara-san.

"According to the author’s investigation, apparently his majesty the king was really partial to Sleigh-san’s son. Walt House that was a house of quasi-baron at that time was promoted into a baron house. That’s what is written here."

The Fourth affirmed it.

[That’s right. Thanks to that there was so many difficulty.]

"Facts are written here that they received special treatment, like his majesty introducing marriage partner to the son."

I couldn’t give any clear answer to Clara-san.

"……I, I think I’ve heard about something like that once."

"Is that so? Then, perhaps what is written in this book is the truth."

The Third strongly insisted to me.

[Lyle! Solve this misunderstanding no matter what. At this rate, baseless rumor like me having relationship with that shitty bastard will spread far and wide. I absolutely won’t forgive that. Protect my honor!]

……No, I too didn’t know about the matter of that time.

"E, err, I think the Third—Sleigh Walt didn’t have that kind of relationship with his majesty."

"Is that a fact that is only known by family? Then, please tell me which part is different."

Clara-san’s eyes sparkled bright. She fixed the position of her glasses and started preparing her memo. She looked really happy.

"……So, sorry. Wait for a bit. I want time to remember various things."

"Yes! I’ll wait."

Her expression turned a bit disappointed, but she immediately made a happy smile. The Third was crying and shouting seeing Clara-san like that.

[Lyle you idiot! Dispel Clara-chan’s misunderstanding right away! This is horrible. THOSE IDIOTIC HISTORIANS OF LATER GENERATIONSSSS!]

By the way, the author was a woman.

.

Inside the Jewel.

After we returned to the inn, the Third told me to come immediately so I came but…….

The Third was standing in front of the memory room behind his chair.

[……Now, let’s go.]

His normally soft gaze was really sharp and cloudy.

[I need Lyle to know everything.]

"……Say, is the truth really that different?"

The other ancestors didn't make any interjection at the Third's atmosphere that differed from usual.

Only the Fourth called out.

[I also don't know about the full story of that time. I'm also bothered that the Third is this bothered about it, can I come along?]

[That's fine. Come on, follow me.]

The Third wasn't composed like usual. He led us to enter the memory room. When the door opened and we entered—it was a battlefield there.

The sky was covered with thick clouds.

It seemed it was raining. Both armies were soaked with mud while firing arrows at each other.

Sometimes magic was fired. Screams and explosion sounds could be heard.

On the ground……there were the figures of unmoving people.

The Fourth narrowed his gaze.

[This isn't at Remlraudt isn't it?]

The Third nodded. His gaze was poured at his own figure on a horse while taking command.

[That shitty bastard, he proclaimed a territory expansion and launched war at the surrounding. It was because Bahnseim was relatively big. He invaded the surrounding one after another.]

The battle that the Third—Sleigh Walt participated in was also one of that invasion war.

Sleigh was holding a sword on his horse while giving instruction to his surrounding.

[Don’t do anything stupid! It’ll be our win if we can buy time!]

He was leading around 150 soldiers—they were his territory’s populace.

There were also the figures of several knights.

The Third was explaining apathetically.

[Thanks to the Second establishing various things, at that time our territory was expanding smoothly. The number of new settlements was also increasing, and the surrounding of our mansion was also getting lively. There was also a market being held periodically, and also shops getting opened.]

It seemed that at that time the populace numbered more than a thousand.

The Fourth was nostalgic.

[Before the promotion, it was quite relaxing wasn’t it?]

[Perhaps the Fourth is feeling indebted to that shitty bastard, but from where I’m standing i feel that what he had done for you was only natural. Bluntly speaking I hate war.]

While defending against the attacking enemy, their ally arrived and defeated the enemy.

Sleigh was watching that occurrence on his horse.

The memory fast forwarded. Sleigh was walking among the defeated enemy soldiers.

Among the dead enemy soldiers, there was a survivor who was still young. When Sleigh approached, that soldier was—

[You accursed Bahnseim fiend! Go to hell!]

He yelled that and vomited blood and then he ran out of strength.

The Third hid his face with one hand.

[……It was really hell. Certainly there was also the reason why the territory had to be expanded. At that time the number of populace increased too much. Bad harvest happened continuously and difficulty to obtain food occurred frequently. We had to steal from other in order to live.]

There was no food, and if they were careless then fellow nobles of Bahnseim would fight each other and the country would be exhausted.

At such time, the policy that Bahnseim Kingdom created was—territory expansion.

Rather than having domestic conflict, stole from the foreign country instead. That was the policy.

[The region called Weihs was rich. There was no bad harvest or hunger. But, the other territory was different. If we didn't participate in the war, then the nobles of the same country might come attacking our territory. It was possible they would seek food by stealing everything inside our territory.]

The structure of the country called Bahnseim was the feudal lords obeying the kingdom as the one with most strength.

There wasn't really any loyalty there, they were following the kingdom's authority because of the kingdom's power—the military power, the economic power, and so on behind the kingdom.

The awareness between each other that they were fellow people of the same country was thin.

That was why, feudal lords of the same country could be in battle with each other.

[There wasn't any choice of not joining the war. But you see, the shitty bastard who inherited the throne after didn't understand that.]

The scene changed. The soldiers of Bahnseim were attacking the villages of the enemy country.

The knights and soldiers were pillaging even the urban area. A terrible scene was unfolding.

Sleigh was taking distance and watched the sight that was painful to even be looked at.

One of the subordinates suggested to Sleigh.

[My lord, aren't we going to join them?]

Among the subordinates who were ordered to not participate in the pillage, there were also people who felt dissatisfaction.

Sleigh glared at him.

[I ordered you not to join.]

[But, everyone is doing it. We should make a little bit of money here—]

Sleigh swung his sword. That soldier's neck was severed. The blood spurt showered him, but he didn't even twitch his eyebrow and ordered the surrounding once more.

[—Stand by here. I'll cut down those who join in the pillage without mercy.]

Unlike the Third who I usually watched, Sleigh was really scary at the battlefield.

The Third looked at his past self and muttered that he was pathetic.

[I couldn't do anything except watching. I couldn't even stop them or saving the victim. If there is someone who call this me as righteous general, than that person must be a big idiot.]

The Fourth denied that.

[I think it's honorable just from not participating in this.]

[Honorable? You're wrong. It was a calculated thinking. This is different from stripping off the belonging of those who came attacking you. ……Before long, doing this will make you want to go to war for the sake of pillaging.]

The people who learned how profitable pillaging was would gradually feel less guilt.

It would become even more severe through each fight.

They would want even more each time they pillaged.

[It was crazy. Everyone was crazy, and then they made a blunder at Remlraudt.]

The scene changed once more. It was inside a tent.

A man who was even younger than Sleigh was sitting on an extravagant chair.

He was wearing a shiny armor and around him there were knights serving him.

I could also see the figure of people who seemed to be feudal lords participating in the war.

Sleigh was also in this place, apparently as an escort of one of the participating feudal lord—a baron.

[I don't have any lord and retainer relationship with that guy. The baron who I was indebted to back home was participating, so I also joined reluctantly.]

This baron, apparently he was a caregiver for Walt House at that time—a noble who possessed the strength to consolidate his surrounding. It seemed that Walt House also obeyed the baron house in their position as a dependent.

The Fourth's glasses glinted mysteriously when he looked at the baron.

He was glaring with a sharp gaze.

[……You two looked really close.]

The Third seemed to guess something. He spoke about that time indifferently.

[It was because Ojii-chan was a dragon slayer and Tou-san was feared with how he defeated a ton of monsters and bandits. The impression in the baron's mind was that Walt House is a house that is reliable in battlefield, something like that I guess. We were called every time each time he joined a battle.]

A meeting was being hold inside the tent.

The king at that time was young. He wore extravagant armor and held the right of command. He was explaining the tactic in front of a map.

[The idiots of Remlraudt insulted us as atrocious and inhuman. We shall deliver them a clean destruction. Our side has prepared an army that is three times bigger than them. We'll surround and exterminate them. That's the tactic this time.]

The surrounding knights were unanimously praising the king.

[Magnificent tactic my lord.]

[The cowards of Remlraudt must be scared and trembling seeing our number around this time.]

[I'm worried instead that they'll run away before the battle.]

The participating feudal lords were watching them with cold eyes.

I felt like the temperature inside the tent was split into two.

"Say, this is—"

[Hm? Ah, the people around the shitty bastard are the capital noble bunch. Those guys handed out the obtained territory to their favorite vassals. There was also some guys who obeyed the shitty bastard among the feudal lords but……most feudal lords already washed their hands of him around this time.]

The baron and Sleigh were talking with small voice.

[Sleigh, what do you think?]

[We're exhausted from the continuous war. We also don't manage to procure decent equipment. Even though we are three times the enemy's number, I can't feel relieved.]

[I heard that the enemy’s fighting spirit is high?]

[It’s extremely high due to their hatred toward Bahnseim Kingdom. That’s just how atrocious the deed that we had committed against them.]

The surrounding feudal lords also had the same opinion.

[The capital noble is doing nothing except commanding from behind.]

[It’s only us who get worn down.]

[These guys monopolized all the achievement.]

The king who obtained a string of victory looked cocky even from my eyes. He only lent his ears to the praise from his surrounding, while saying things like "Too passive""You guys just need to obey the order""You coward" without any respect.

The young king said.

[Encircle the fools of Remlraudt and exterminate them!]

Sleigh was watching that scene with a cold gaze.

When the fight began, Remlraudt’s army charged in a straight line toward Bahnseim’s headquarter.

The king was flustered inside the tent.

[Why!? Why are they heading this way!? Our allies haven’t arrived yet!?]

The king must have thought that the enemy would be scared from getting surrounded, but on the contrary the enemy aimed at the headquarter that became lightly guarded and launched a charge.

The soldiers at the headquarter was split among the allies so the number remaining her was only few.

The allies that were encircling the enemy were also fighting but, the headquarter of Bahnseim's side would fall first from how it looked like.

Even I thought……is this guy an idiot?

However, the Third said.

[Surrounding the enemy and crushing them wasn't a bad tactic. But you see, they underestimated the enemy. They didn't understand just what the hell they had done.]

I thought that they were stupid, but the Third didn't deny the tactic itself.

From the standpoint of the enemy—Bahnseim Kingdom attacked and destroyed the surrounding countries with some made-up excuses. They were nothing but demon who repeatedly pillaged their country.

[The enemy also couldn't afford to lose. Because, if they died, what would be waiting for them was the pillaging by Bahnseim. The enemy was also desperate. ……Well, I was also similarly desperate though.]

Entering inside the tent was the mud soaked Sleigh and his caregiver baron.

When the baron came, the king yelled.

[What are you doing returning!? Go fight! I, if I lose then Bahnseim will be defeat—]

His hangers-on around him were panicked, while the feudal lords were glaring at the king.

Amidst that, Sleigh pushed aside the baron and punched the king’s face.

The Fourth seeing that opened his mouth in shock. I also yelled.

"What are you doing!/"

The Third grinned.

[It was really refreshing at this time!]

The king was sent flying. He crashed on his chair and fell down. The hangers-on around him were dumbfounded for an instant, but they immediately took up their weapon.

[Yo, you bastard!]

[I don’t know who and where do you come from but, don’t think you will die easily!]

[Detain that guy!]

There wasn’t anyone around who knew Sleigh’s name.

At that time, Sleigh was nothing more than one of the many small feudal lords.

But—.

[—Heh?]

—The feudal lord nobles and the knights at their side drew out their sword and went swinging. They attacked not at Sleigh but at the hangers-on of the king.

The king who was bleeding from his nose was pressing his nose with his right hand while shivering uncontrollably.

His allies died around him, so he went pale.

Sleigh approached the king who was crawling on the ground and crouched down. He brought his face near and grabbed the king's hair to lift up his head.

[A, after doing this don't think you'll be able to go home safe—]

The king's voice was trembling, in contrast Sleigh was completely calm.

[Aa, you're right. Because of your fault, I might die here. But rest assured, you're going to die here too.]

The feudal lords and knights approached with unsheathed sword.

The king finally soiled his pant—.

[Did you think everyone here swore their loyalty to you? Wrong. What we need is that chair you're sitting on. We swore our loyalty to the authority of the kingdom, we don't have any to you personally. Don't you think an incompetent king who can be replaced is needed?]

The king was crying.

[Ple, please save me. I'll do anything! Please save me!]

Sleigh smiled coldly at the king who was crying—.

[I see. Then, I'll make you into a splendid king from here on.]

When Sleigh's eyes faintly shined, the king was trembling hard.

"Is that the Third's Art?"

[Yeah. Well, Lyle will also be able to do that soon.]

The king's state became strange. He gritted his teeth in fear and his body wouldn't stop shaking.

[……If you try anything bad at my family and territory, you will continue to see endless nightmare from that day forward. It will be also the same if you punish the feudal lords here. The moment you thought of getting payback just for a bit, you will continue to see nightmare whether you're asleep or awake.]

When Sleigh let go of his hand, the king's hand brushed away at his surrounding. It was as though there was something visible only to him.

[Don't come! DON'T COMEEEE! Help! Someone help!]

Sleigh was chuckling.

[Oh, it looks like you planned to take revenge to us when this is over just as I thought. If you don't want to see endless nightmare just like now, then don't try anything against us.]

The king lost his willpower to resist and continued to cry at that place.

The baron approached.

[Sleigh, what to do now?]

[……I'll buy time. I'll leave this idiot on your hand. Also, take care of my family too.]

[I understand.]

The Fourth muttered.

[……How ironic.]

The feudal lords in that place talked to Sleigh.

They said words of encouragement to Sleigh who said he would buy time, or words of praise, there were various words.

Sleigh smiled bitterly while leaving the tent, but his face turned determined right after he came outside.

When he came to the place where his knights and soldiers were waiting, Sleigh declared.

[My bad but I ask you guys to die with me. The young kid and parent with small children will stay behind. ……Feel free to resent me.]

After explaining frankly, a man with streaks of white hair came forward.

That man’s face looked familiar.

"He is the man who complained to the Second."

I glared at the man who was complaining at the Second without even understanding the trouble he had, but…….

[……I was a bother for the previous head. If young master will allow me to accompany you, then that will be my atonement.]

Sleigh smiled slightly.

[The way you call me young master isn’t fixed until the end huh.]

In contrast to Sleigh’s words that "the young people stay behind", the young knights also came forward.

[My lord, I, I’ll also come!]

The Third looked nostalgic.

[This kid is the first generation Lundberg. I heard from the Seventh, that the house of the knight who I appointed is still continuing even now. It somehow felt miraculous when I thought about it.]

The Fourth was also looking happy.

[……He was a reliable knight at my era. Thinking back like this, he was a loyal retainer who the Third left behind for me.]

When speaking of Lundberg, it was a distinguished family even among the retainers of Walt House. Even at the present time, Lundberg House continued to produce capable knights one after another to support Walt House.

……The person who I looked up as a knight was also a member of Lundberg House.

Sleigh punched the first generation Lundberg with a smile.

Just like when he punched the king, he strengthened his body with Art. Because of that, he displayed a great strength. But, he was holding back compared to when he punched the king.

[You stay behind.]

The other soldiers talked to the first generation Lundberg, but there was no reply. He fainted.

[My lord, he fainted.]

[Good. This kid is serious, so when he wakes up send him as messenger back home. ……Then, let's go.]

Sleigh led several dozen soldiers mounted on horse and launched a charge toward the approaching big army of Remlraudt.

The battlefield.

Sleigh was swinging his sword on his horse and advancing forward.

He defeated the enemy knights one after another, and then he lifted his sword.

[Charge!]

Right after that, fire balls fell from the sky to the surrounding one after another.

The soldiers of Remlraudt looked to the sky and yelled.

Seeing that scene the Fourth was—.

[Is that illusion?]

The Third stared at the battlefield while nodding.

[That's right. It's my Art. I only showed them illusion. And then, one more thing—]

When Sleigh led the soldiers to charge forward, the enemies suddenly began fighting among themselves.

He used that opening to cut deep into the enemy formation and the enemy's general came into view.

The enemy general wielded a spear and blocked Sleigh's sword.

[Illusion! Find the Art's user and kill him!]

The general was older than Sleigh with muscular body. His atmosphere was that of a fierce general.

While they were fighting with sword and spear clashing above the horse, the general leaped at Sleigh and pushed him on the ground.

The two became smeared with mud and began fighting.

[Trashes of Bahnseim. Your atrocity cannot be left alone anymore than this!]

[What coincidence, I also agree. But—there's no way I can let you guys advance further than this.]

The movement of Sleigh's sword that could be said as phantasmagoric forced the general into a bitter fight.

The Third watched the fight while,

[This person was strong. Besides he was noble and stood up to fight due to his righteous indignation after hearing Bahnseim's deed. ……Even I, didn't want to fight him.]

The general's spear cut off Sleigh's left arm.

Sleigh's left arm was flying in the air, but then the general opened his eyes wide.

Because Sleigh leaped onto his chest and a sword pierced his chest.

[I see……so you're the one showing the illusion.]

When Sleigh pulled out the sword, his left hand was certainly still there.

It seemed the arm that was seemingly cut was an illusion.

But, from how pale his face was it seemed Sleigh reached his limit. He ran out of mana and he looked like he would collapse even now.

Even the allies around him were getting cut down one after another.

[Young master!]

A soldier whose stomach was stabbed with spear came with Sleigh’s horse in tow. He vomited blood while helping Sleigh to mount the horse, then he hit the horse’s flank to make it run.

That man, he got stabbed from behind by several spears of the enemies——even so, that person was smiling.

"Why……when it was the Second’s time he!"

At the Second’s era, that man was a villager who kept complaining and troubling the Second. But, at the Third’s era, he risked his life to save the Third……I didn’t understand.

The Third taught me.

[Even if at first they didn’t understand, later they would think that person was right. Some people are like that. Perhaps he felt guilty from that.]

An arrow pierced the back of the escaping Sleigh.

And then, when the enemy tried to chase after Sleigh—the besieging allies finally came to help.

The Third told me.

[……My territory was near this battlefield. If Bahnseim lost here, it would be our territory that got trampled. There was no way I could lose. Even though I understood that Bahnseim was in the wrong, I couldn’t tell my family to die.]

"……Third."

[Lyle, you better remember. There was also that previous exception but, many of the soldiers weren’t fighting for me. They fought for the sake of their family who remained behind in the

territory. They understood that if we lost, the sight we had seen until now would happen at our own home town.]

The Fourth was keeping silent all this time.

The Third muttered.

[I really…….hate war.]

Chapter 82 – Righteous General Sleigh Walt

The Third's memory moved from the battlefield scenery to a tent.

The doctor treating Sleigh who was lying down shook his head.

Sleigh whose breath was already weakening was looking up to the ceiling vacantly. Light was vanishing from his eyes and it was unclear whether he even still had his consciousness.

The Third folded his arms.

『……I didn't want to die in the battlefield.』

The Fourth who had been keeping quiet all this time took off his glasses and lifted his face.

『Third—Tou-san. Can I show Lyle my memory?』

The Third nodded.

『Yeah, that's fine. I also want to watch.』

『Thank you.』

The scene switched to the Fourth's memory—it was the mansion of Walt House at that time.

—That day, Max Walt was in the mansion.

He was worried about his father, Sleigh who was participating in a really big battle.

「Tou-san, I wonder if he's alright?」

He recalled Sleigh who always came home safely and jokingly said things like 「I want to retire and leave the rest to you」.

「……He'll be alright too this time won't he?」

The fourteen years old Max wasn't in the age to go to the battlefield and stayed behind.

He was gradually getting involved with the work inside their territory and at this rate it was planned for him to assist Sleigh for real in a few more years.

He would inherit the position of feudal lord when he was around thirty years old in the plan.

Max was studying in the mansion, but then the mansion became noisy.

「What is it?」

He exited his room and got down the stair. There a knight was breaking down crying at the entrance.

The mud covered knight was yelling in a kneeling posture like kowtow.

「Our ally won. But, Sleigh-sama was heavily wounded……the doctor said that he won't have long.」

The young man who his father appointed as knight hurriedly came here to report. His face looked tired. He was spilling tears of frustration and his body was wounded all over.

Mark stood still.

「……Lies.」

The one who was receiving the report from the knight was Passetto Walt—the wife of Sleigh and Max's mother.

Passetto was listening to the report expressionlessly. When the knight finished his report and let go of his consciousness, she gave instruction to the servants in the mansion.

「Clean his body and lay him down to sleep. After that, gather the remaining males.」

She was behaving courageously, but her complexion was pale.

Passetto married with Sleigh through marriage interview, but their relationship as husband and wife wasn't bad.

Although she was exasperated with the unmotivated Sleigh, she was a woman who would assist him with a smile.

「……Kaa-san.」

Passetto turned around—and then said.

「Maz, resolve yourself. Hurry to where your father is. From today—you are the head of Walt House.」

Because the inheritance hadn't been passed down formally, strictly speaking she wasn't a feudal lord.

But, from Walt House's perspective such thing was irrelevant. Someone to drag the territory forward—a feudal lord was necessary.

Max prepared in a hurry and rushed out from the entrance.

He mounted the prepared horse and headed toward the battlefield where Sleigh was at with several guards.

He galloped his horse along a maintained road.

What was in the mind of such Max was,

(Quickly. Even faster!)

The feeling to hurry made Max manifested his Art. The horses were speeding up and continued to run while the guards were surprised.

Max rushed through the maintained road and the battlefield was gradually coming into view.

When he arrived the soldiers of Walt House were waiting and guided Max to the tent where Sleigh was waiting.

When the sweaty Max entered the tent, the knights and soldiers around were crying.

Sleigh smiled in pain, and then he held out a blue Gem—the heirloom of Walt House to Maz.

Max grabbed that hand with both hands.

「Tou-san! Tou-san!」

「……Max, sorry. Take care, of the rest.」

He said that, took a deep breath, and then Sleigh closed his eyes and passed away.

Max was trembling.

The doctor nearby said 「It's amazing how he held out this long. Surely, he was waiting for you his son」, but it didn't seem to enter Max's ear.

He spilled tears and tightly grasped the hand of Sleigh that was holding the blue Gem.

The blue Gem looked like it was faintly shining—.

.

I who finished watching the memory of the Third and the Fourth stood still on the spot in a daze.

I was speechless in front of the truth that differed from what was written in the book.

I also understood the reason why the Third couldn't accept being called the righteous general.

The Fourth opened his mouth.

『……After this, his majesty favored me in various things. I felt indebted to him because I didn't know the truth. Our caregiver the baron also didn't tell me anything.』

The Fourth was having a frustrated feeling after learning the truth now.

He was muttering that if he knew this he wouldn't feel any gratitude or anything.

The Third didn't blame the Fourth.

『I think you've done your best you know? You became a baron and drastically expand the territory didn't you? You must be lacking manpower to manage all of that, it can't be helped that you couldn't split your attention to other matter.』

The Fourth raised in rank—he was promoted due to the Third's achievement.

Because he became a baron, the territory expanded.

It was great to hear about promotion, but from the perspective of the Third, he felt that the Fourth had it hard to suddenly inherit the position.

『……The truth is really cruel. Even though the Third took down the enemy general, the achievement ended up into his majesty's hand.』

It seemed that it was arranged so it seemed the king was the one to take down the enemy general.

The Third was enraged while still smiling.

『That shitty bastard. I should punch him more than once.』

The Fourth also agreed.

『You're right. I also should punch him once.』

The Two were laughing.

They were laughing—and then they looked at me.

『Do you understand Lyle? With what kind of feeling we fought……Being called a righteous general is exaggerated. They're speaking about the selfish and heinous me.』

「……Calling yourself heinous is too excessive isn't it?」

『You won't be able to be feudal lord without being heinous. Well, if there is justice in this world, then the feudal lords are basically villain.』

The Third was gradually getting back to his usual self. He looked at me and smiled a bit sadly.

『That's why I'm thinking. Lyle, it's fine to not get fixated with the status of noble. You can just live more for your own sake.』

……For the time being I was raising an objective of becoming a first class adventurer, but I still had nothing that could be called as my life objective.

The Third told that kind of me to live freely.

But, the Fourth's opinion was different.

『As for me, I wish that Lyle would inherit the territory though. In the first place, he is the legitimate heir……and our emotional attachment to it is just that much.』

It seemed the ancestors starting from the Fourth ahead wished for me to inherit their territory.

The Seventh was also conveying to me that he wanted me to takeback the territory.

The Third was refusing such opinion.

『I think there's no need to be fixated to it though? Lyle's happiness is unrelated with the territory.』

『There are things that has been accumulated until now. It won't be hard if we can just discard it so easily.』

The attachment became stronger along with the accumulation of generation.

If the First and the Second were here, what kind of words they would tell me?

The next day.

I and Clara-san were sitting on the sofa at the inn's first floor while talking.

I said the truth to Clara-san but—.

「Eh? Why are you making that doubtful look?」

Clara-san was giving me a gaze as though she was looking at something suspicious. She stopped taking memo.

No matter how I saw it she was doubting me.

「Should I say that Lyle-san's story is slightly lacking authenticity……the part about punching a king and not getting executed is also dubious, even if you said that the Art and other factor is the reason for that, and the part about the one who defeated the enemy general was also Lyle-san's ancestor, even if you said that」

Even though I was speaking of the truth, she didn't believe me.

As expected this was outside my expectation.

The Third was also screaming.

『Why!? Believe it, Clara-chan! Don't talk like it's the sham history book that is ringing of truth!』

Clara-san pondered, and then she made her conclusion.

「Well, Walt House that was a quasi-baron house at that time being intimate with his majesty is also a dubious story. I can accept them being treated just like every other house. The story about charging at the large army and buying time seemed to be the truth too, but I'm suspicious whether Sleigh Walt really took down the enemy general.」

She was doubting that it was strange after punching the king, Walt House wasn't crushed after that.

Certainly, thinking normally it was an impossible story.

Even I would be doubting it if I hadn't seen the Third's memory.

「……Everything, is the truth.」

「I also understand Lyle-san's feeling that want to believe that. But, it's not like you actually saw it yourself……」

I saw it! It was painful being unable to say that.

I was keeping secret about the matter of the ancestors even toward my comrades.

Because of that there was little proof no matter how much I explained that it was the truth…….

「……I will record it as the testimony of a descendant.」

Clara-san wouldn't believe me.

When my shoulders dropped in dejection, Eva-san approached.

She was really energetic since the morning.

「Ah, Lyle! Is the extra Clara also well?」

Clara-san who was treated as an extra was expressionless in front of Eva-san.

「I'm well, liar Eva-san.」

The two of them were in discord since the morning.

They both had shared hobby of loving story, but due to their different personality the two of them had incompatible relationship.

Clara-san was thinking that the truth had to be conveyed accurately.

In contrast, Eva-san was thinking that if it could enliven the audience then some dramatization was alright! Story was something to be enjoyed regardless of the truth.

……They were incompatible.

「Well, Clara doesn't matter. More importantly, what were you two talking about?」

「Actually—」

When I talked regarding the miracle of Remlraudt, Eva-san was showing a strong interest. She sat beside me and listened to the story passionately with her face really close.

Then—.

「……It's good.」

「Eh?」

「I like that kind of story. The part where he punches the king flying is also good. The man who is called the righteous general is actually hating the king more than anyone! Yep, it's exciting!」

Even though Clara-san who was seeking for the truth wouldn't believe the story, Eva-san who wanted story to be exciting liked the Third's truth.

The Third was also bewildered.

『……Eeeeh?』

Eva-san grabbed my shoulders.

「Hey, tell me even more. I want to listen to the story that Lyle know. Let's talk a lot today.」

Her eyes were serious.

I heard that elf showed strong interest toward new topic or unknown story.

I understood what that meant from seeing Eva-san.

Clara stood up and returned to her room.

「Then, I'll excuse myself.」

Eva-san called out to such Clara-san.

「You too should go out sometimes. It's unhealthy to do nothing but reading book.」

「……I've gone out for shopping yesterday.」

Clara-san said that and climbed the stair. I felt like she was a bit angry.

Why?

The Fourth was sighing.

『Lyle is really no good. Even after having growth, only your treatment of woman hasn't progressed.』

The Sixth was laughing.

『They're really innocent! Well, let's watch for a while, the problem is Eva.』

Eva-san looked at me restlessly.

「Lyle, tell me some story quickly. Hey, quickly!」

She was excited and her cheeks reddened.

My heart was beating a little fast.

「No, that—」

While I was being troubled, Shannon appeared bringing sweets.

「Haa, my remaining sweets are only these. I want to go buy more but the outside is cold, and I'm also bored playing with snow.」

She was saying such thing, but only recently she was playing snow outside with Monica. I also joined for a bit but……she was someone

who wanted to play the next day too even after playing for the whole day.

「You're really free huh.」

Being called by me at the morning seemed to make her displeased from how she was making 「Geh!」 voice.

Eva-san looked at Shannon.

「Why are you bringing sweets? You should eat them in your room.」

Shannon's shoulders dropped.

「……Onee-sama is starting to mix her chemical there. Besides, recently she was angry because I dropped food remains everywhere.」

「Of course she would get angry.」

When I spoke that it was only natural, Shannon glared at me.

「You're really annoying.」

「You're stupid. I'll tattle on you at Miranda-san.」

「……I get it. I'll share these sweets with you so let's have a dialogue.」

「Don't think I'll get lured by sweets.」

Eva-san who was watching my exchange with Shannon was chuckling.

「What's the matter?」

Eva-san looked at me and then she smiled.

「Lyle, you're like a child. Somehow, it looks like that's your natural state. You two look like a brother and sister whose age is close with each other I think. The two of you feels younger than your appearance suggest.」

When I was going to protest at what she said, the ancestors were also agreeing.

『Aa~, I get her.』

『Certainly Lyle is childish despite his age.』

『He's really energetic when arguing with Shannon.』

『Perhaps that's because their mental age is close?』

『It's no good if you don't be more adult. Be kind to Shannon who is like a little sister.』

……I hated the existence of little sister.

Shannon protested at Eva-san.

「I'm more like Lyle's big sister! Putting aside our age, I'm more reliable than this guy!」

「You always called me gigolo but, you are more of a gigolo than me! Don't talk like I'm worse than you!」

We glared at each other, then Shannon put her sweets on the table.

And then she suddenly showed the stance of raging sparrow.

「……You, you're serious huh. So you seriously want to have a go!」

Shannon was serious.

We who were learning martial art from Monica was the so called fellow pupil. Exactly because we were fellow pupil that I immediately sensed how serious Shannon was.

I spoke with a serious face.

「Come at me. This is the day I give you a crushing defeat.」

When I also took the stance of raging sparrow, Eva-san was cackling and hitting the sofa.

「Both of you're the best! That serious face is great. Even though it looks stupid, the way you two are being so serious really hit the point.」

I and Shannon looked at Eva-san.

「I'm serious here!」

「I'm serious!」

Eva-san was laughing while holding her stomach hearing that.

「Noo good. My stomach hurt!」

When I noticed, the inn's staffs and guests were also looking at us with a smile.

I and Shannon glared at each other, and then when we were about to start the match—.

「……What are you doing, Lyle-sama?」

We were found out by Novem who came down to the first floor.

「Novem!」

「Lyle-sama, that is a bother for the other guests. Please stop from making a ruckus here.」

「Ah, yes, then outside—」

When I looked outside from the window, it was snowing too today. The wind was strong, pushing the snow horizontally which caused the field of vision to be bad. Going outside to fight was……a bit inconvenient in this weather.

I took off my stance and Shannon also did the same.

Both of us similarly didn't want to fight so much that we would go outside.

Novem let out an exasperated sigh.

「Eva-san too don't just watch and please stop their quarrel.」

Eva-san apologized to Novem who was warning her but……she was laughing. It didn't look like she was reflecting at all.

「I'm sorry. But, it was funny.」

「Even so please stop them.」

「Because, recently we can't go outside so it's boring. Aa~a, I want to go out somewhere.」

Eva-san lied down on the sofa. She was warned by Novem that attitude was also bad and she stood up.

She looked at Shannon while,

「That's right! Both of you, won't you go out together with me this time? It feels like it will be really fun to go out with the two of you.」

「Ee~, me and this guy? Well, I can at least use him as bag carrier.」

「Bring your own thing by yourself.」

「You are really not kind to me. A boy should be kind to a girl.」

「No, I'm not thinking of you as girl anyway.」

A vein formed on Shannon's forehead. She kicked my knee.

「Ouch!」

「Stu~pid!」

Her kick was sharp unlike before, anyway it was hurt. Even though this fellow couldn't do anything due to lack of stamina just a little while ago, now she was able to make a good movement.

She took her sweets and ran away to the second floor. Novem saw her off and then got angry at me.

「Lyle-sama, please get along with her a bit more.」

「No, but……」

For some reason, I kept getting into quarrel with that fellow.

Perhaps our compatibility was bad?

Eva-san went 「It's fine isn't it」 seeing us like that and said,

「The two of them fight because they've good relationship.」

I couldn't accept that and turned a doubting gaze at Eva-san.

「Oh, you don't believe me?」

When I averted my gaze, Eva-san made a face that said Can't be helped.

「Like that you don't really show your natural self to us. You still add '-san' to everyone except with Novem and Shannon. Other than them there is only Monica.」

Even if she told me that, it's……troubling.

—The night of that day.

Novem tried to visit Walt residence in the capital.

She heard that the house where the capital noble Walt House had been living at for generations was sold and she brought herself here.

The building was in the process of being demolished. The scenery looked different from before.

「I should inform my family of this.」

Novem left her house and chased after Lyle, but she decided to contact them because she also couldn't leave this alone.

She was wearing a hooded robe while walking under the falling snow.

The snow she stepped on made a sound.

「For the same Walt House to be this different, it's completely out of the question.」

Novem talked to herself while walking on the snow expressionlessly—.

—At a bar within the capital.

Three men were doing violence in a nearby alley toward Lionel.

「Don't screw around!」

「You want to win so bad you would cheat huh!」

「In addition you're picking a fight, are you idiot?」

Lionel was receiving violence, but there was reason for this.

He played poker with these three, but Lionel was cheating. His trick was easily exposed and the three was enraged and protested. Lionel then got driven out from the bar.

After that, when the three came out Lionel was lying in wait and assaulted them.

The three also got the mark from getting punched on them.

「Let's go.」

「This guy, isn't he the knight who got bad reputation recently?」

「Now that you mention it, there was that kind of rumor.」

The three left.

Lionel was lying face down on top of snow that was mixed with mud. He then turned around to face the sky.

「……Shit.」

The inside of his mouth was cut and blood was flowing from the corner of his mouth.

His tattered clothes was something he had been wearing continuously for several days.

He lost in casino and the reward he received from the subjugation had been used up.

He also sold his house and pawned the medal he had……like that he was using up even the money he obtained.

He was persecuted by his family, even so Lionel couldn’t stop gambling.

People were saying that it was as though he was a different person when he returned and now he had no more friend who would talk to him—however Lionel was laughing.

「Aa~a, I lost. I wonder what I’ll do after this.」

He was grinning, and then while he was thinking of stealing from other people, a voice addressed him.

「……You’re, Lionel?」

Lionel lifted up his upper body. There he saw Aria standing with one hand carrying a bag.

「Eh, ah—」

「Are you injured? Please wait a second.」

Aria took out a handkerchief and wiped Lionel’s blood for him. Sophia who was standing behind Aria was tilting her head.

「Is he your acquaintance?」

「……He was in my group at the subjugation force.」

「Aa~, from there.」

Sophia looked convinced.

Sophia didn’t notice that this person was Lionel.

Aria was making a slightly sad face. Lionel who participated in the hippogriff subjugation force was in Aria’s group but he ran away from in front of the enemy.

Lionel didn’t want only Aria to see his current figure.

「You stink of alcohol. Your clothes is also really dirty.」

Aria said to Lionel in worry.

「……I have a lot of things that I want to say but, you should work hard seriously. After all you managed to survive.」

Aria gave her handkerchief to Lionel and then moved to leave from there.

Lionel called at her to stop.

「Wa, wait!」

Aria and Sophia turned around.

Lionel stood up and tightly clutched the handkerchief.

「I'm in this state right now but, surely……no, I'll be great without fail. I'll be successful!」

Aria smiled.

「I see. Do your best okay?」

She showed her back and waved her hand. Sophia followed after her.

Lionel brought the handkerchief that was dirtied by blood to his nose and sniffed it.

「It's Aria's scent. Just you wait. Because I'll come to pick you up without fail.」

Lionel was making a dark smile. He was staring fixedly on Aria's back until she was gone from view—.

We were unable to get out of the capital due to the snow.

We were also on our guard against retaliation from Ralph-san, but for some reason Ralph-san no movement could be seen from him.

He didn't even place anyone nearby to observe us. Even though I tricked him, he didn't try to do anything.

「It's eerie instead like this.」

I walked in the capital that was covered with snow while focusing at my surrounding, even so it was quiet.

Monica who was walking beside me was grinning happily from being able to go out together with me.

「Going in a date with chicken dickwad is the best. The snowy landscape of the royal capital is also really romantic. I'm so pleased that my happy memory is increasing.」

「Happy memory?」

「Please think of it as a record that is composed of my love with chicken dickwad.」

「Hm~m, good for you.」

「Cold! Chicken dickwad is colder than even snow! But, I also love that kind of chicken dickwad.」

Monica was happy no matter what I said to her. I could only feel exasperated to her.

I changed the topic.

「Damian is still staying in the capital you said?」

「You suddenly changed the topic. Well, it's fine. ……Professor Damian is staying in the capital. I was told that the tools he is ordering haven't been finished yet. He is staying outside the capital

using Porter as his lodging together with that mass-produced product.」

The Porter that Damian created was far larger than even mine.

According to Monica, it was called Dumpcar and it was mainly Lily-san who completed it.

Damian and Lily-san who created it in a short time from Porter's blueprint were amazing.

「I want to try seeing it once.」

「Fuh, it's not as good as Proter that is the crystallization of love between me and chicken dickwad. Even so, the situation in the capital is strange.」

Monica was looking around restlessly.

「Strange?」

「Yes. When I went outside I gathered various rumors, but it seems that the crown prince of Bahnseim Kingdom annulled his betrothal with a princess of another country. And then there is also rumor that right after that he found a new fiancee—」

「……No way.」

After I muttered, the ancestors were also astonished.

『Betrothal annulment? Did something happen I wonder?』

『Normally that's unthinkable.』

『It seems stormy.』

『It looks to be stormy.』

『……Please wait. When I was live, I think the fiancée candidate of the crown prince was the princess of Faunbeux Kingdom though?』

Faunbeux Kingdom.

A large country located at the west of Bahnseim Kingdom. These two country fought fiercely at the past.

I didn't know the chain of events that caused the two royal families to perform engagement with each other, but the betrothal annulment sounded completely strange.

「Oi, is that story true?」

「It's true. But, the strangeness starts from here. The citizens of the capital are accepting of that news. They don't make any ruckus, rather I get the impression that it's the merchants from the outside who are panicking when they learn this fact.」

It shouldn't be strange even if the citizens of the capital were more uneasy due to this news.

If the betrothal annulment became the cause of a war, even the citizens wouldn't be able to stay out of it.

「Come to think of it, Clara-san said that she felt the atmosphere is strange……」

Monica talked of the rumors she obtained to me.

「This is a vague information so I didn't pay it any attention but it seems that the princess of Faunbeux Kingdom is staying in the capital. Even though the betrothal was annulled, she is still lingering here, isn't that a strange story?」

「…….That's, strange.」

While I was bewildered, the Third replied right away.

『That's obviously strange. Perhaps there is something behind the scene?』

The Fourth was also curious.

『I want to try investigating this but, it's impossible for the current Lyle to have a meeting with a royal princess.』

……The Sixth spoke hesitantly.

『Aa~, that's no good. It's better for Walt House to not meet with the princess of Faunbeux Kingdom.』

The Seventh agreed.

『True.』

When I tightly grasped the Jewel, the Seventh started laughing.

『Lyle, I and the Sixth……once fought against Faunbeux Kingdom.』

……That would certainly be awkward.

But, the Sixth and the Seventh didn't end it there.

『In the previous generation or the generation before it, there was a heroic king in Faunbeux Kingdom. ……I took him down in the battlefield.』

『By the way, I beat up his son and chased him away. I also whittled a lot of their territory.』

The two of them talked in nostalgia.

『That guy was strong. He invaded Bahnseim Kingdom and took down famous knights one after another. He attacked until near the

capital Centralle. He was a man that was really worthy to be called a hero but……I was stronger.』

I wanted to hold my head.

『At my time the other side also came invading. They were rejoicing from being able to take back their territory, but I attacked them there and whittled a lot of their territory instead. How's that, Lyle? Ojii-chan is amazing right?』

I ignored the Seventh who was boasting about himself to his grandson.

Walt House had viciously beaten up Faunbeux Kingdom for two successive generations.

Certainly I couldn't meet with them like this. Or rather, I didn't want to meet them.

—Weihs territory.

From the large city that was the stronghold of Walt House, a travelling group that seemed to be noble passed the gate and departed.

Several gorgeous horse carriages were encircled by a lot of carriages and soldiers.

There were also many horse riding knights. There were also many citizens seeing off the group near the gate.

The eight house head of Walt House, Maizel Walt was talking inside a gorgeous horse carriage to his family about future matter.

「Good grief, coming and going from the capital is also bothersome.」

His wife Claire Walt was touching the clothes of Celes Walt who was sitting beside her.

「The palace that keeps summoning us is also irritating. Come ne Celes, don't move. Your clothes will be rumpled.」

Seeing his wife tidying up their daughter's clothes with a smile, Maizel also smiled.

「The two of you will soon be freed from this annoyance. Just bear with it for a bit more.」

The daughter who was making a spoiled expression at her mother tilted her head at Maizel.

「It will be only the two of us?」

Maizel nodded in disappointment.

「As expected I can't leave our territory untended. After I send off Celes to the capital, I'll return back here. But don't worry. Claire will accompany you Celes. I've rebuilt the mansion of Walt House in the capital for the sake of you two so it will be pleasant.」

Celes pouted in dissatisfaction.

「I don't want it. I want Otou-sama to come with us too.」

Celes turned sullen. In respond Maizel was troubled but he also looked happy. He spoke chidingly to her.

「However, we can't just neglect our territory right? Don't worry, after a while I'll also stay in the capital. After all I'll be able to see the figure of my cute 『only child』 in her finest hour there.」

Claire placed her hand on her mouth and smiled.

「Indeed. She is our treasured only child after all.」

……Already, their only child was only Celes in their mind. The matter of Lyle wasn't touched at all.

Celes was arrogant and audacious, but she was a cute daughter in front of her parents.

She hung her head down in dissatisfaction but—.

「Please absolutely come to my place at the day of the celebration. I don't want Otou-sama to not be there.」

「Those words really make me happy as a father. ……I promise, Celes. I will come running no matter what happen in your celebration day.」

Celes smiled with a face that was befitting her age.

She absolutely wouldn't show to her parents the attitude that she directed to Lyle and other people.

The scene of truly happy parents and child could be found there.

But, there wasn't any place for Lyle within that family circle—.

Chapter 83 – Faunbeux's Princess

I wondered, why wouldn't the world go as we wanted?

I who was summoned to the mansion that was owned by Faunbeux royalty was told to sit with Miranda-san and Novem at my sides and drank tea.

Monica was standing behind me.

The girl drinking tea in front of me, Lianne Faunbeux—she was the princess of Faunbeux Kingdom and the former fiancée of Bahnseim Kingdom's crown prince.

Her long deep pink hair was braided and tied up into a bundle.

Her skin was white and her eyes that were the same color with her hair were looking at me.

She was wearing an off shoulder princess dress, giving her an image of a lovely princess. Her slightly bulging chest wasn't small but also wasn't big.

But, she looked slightly gaunt.

It seemed she was hiding it with makeup.

……If I was asked why I was sitting face to face with the princess of Faunbeux Kingdom, the cause was Miranda-san.

Princess Lianne turned her gaze to Miranda-san and smiled.

「Long time no see, Miranda. Even so, I finally found the defect of the capable you. It looks like your taste in man is bad.」

The Fifth was exasperated.

『This princess, she suddenly spoke in sarcasm. Aren't we being hated a lot here?』

I thought that it couldn't be helped even if we were hated.

It was only natural with What Walt House had done.

Miranda-san shrugged.

「Even like this I'm confident with my eyes you know? More importantly, I was surprised when I heard the rumor.」

「I also didn't know that you become an adventurer.」

The two of them were smiling at each other, but I wasn't having fun at all.

Miranda-san was acquainted with Princess Lianne at the capital—or rather, it seemed they had relationship that Miranda-san was invited for a tea party several times.

Using that connection, when Miranda-san was investigating the rumor a contact came from Princess Lianne.

The knights and servants around us were glaring at me.

They were sending their killing intent at me knowing that I was from Walt House.

My stomach hurt.

Princess Lianne turned her gaze to me again.

「……Now then, although disinherited, you're someone who inherited the blood of that Walt House. I wonder if you're aware of your connection with Faunbeux Kingdom.」

Ufufu, she said while bringing up an outrageous topic.

I wanted to run away from this place.

「I heard that various things happened at the previous generation, and also the generation before that.」

「Right. Various things happened. My grandfather was defeated by your ancestor Fiennes Walt. To take down grandfather who was the hero of Faunbeux, he must be a great person.」

My hands were shaking.

I could hear the Sixth's voice『Haha~, that's embarrassing』laughing carefreely from inside the Jewel.

But, the Sixth was a person with various problems……like making a child outside, escaping from his wife because he was scared, or getting mistresses and doing as he pleased. He was that kind of person.

「Besides your grandfather was chasing around my father in the battlefield. Thanks to that my father is still having nightmare you know? Also, the two of them shaved away a lot of territory of Faunbeux.」

The Seventh was nostalgic.

『So even that brat now has this kind of daughter……it makes me feel the flow of time.』

It seemed that when the king of Faunbeux Kingdom was still young, the Seventh beat up the harshness of the battlefield into him.

When I tried investigating with the Sixht's Art, everyone inside the mansion other than Princess Lianne were—all represented as crimson, which meant they were hostile toward me.

It was only Princess Lianne who was showing the neutral color of yellow.

She had no hostility but, she also wasn't an ally……this person, just what was she thinking?

Novem spoke toward Princess Lianne.

「And, what business your highness could possibly have?」

「……The loyalty of Walt House's dog is really splendid. Are you perhaps displeased that your master is being bullied?」

Walt House's dog as a derogatory term toward Novem's house, Forxus House.

It was said that they swore their loyalty toward Walt House rather than the royal family. It seemed such thing was also known by other country.

Novem didn't object.

Princess LIanne drank her tea and then she began to talk.

「I just wanted to see. What kind of man that woman's big brother is. I was surprised when I received the letter from Miranda.」

I looked at Miranda-san.

「……It's amazing, that you could get along with this person. In the first place, Miranda-san is also」

She also had the blood of Walt House flowing inside her.

Miranda-san made a meaningful smile.

「Indeed. That was why, Lianne-sama purposefully summoned me for a tea party only for the sake of making snide remarks at me. That became the impetus.」

The Sixth was angry.

『This woman is the worst!』

The Seventh was the one who complained to such the Sixth.

『The Sixth is the worst man though.』

Princess Lianne also smiled.

「That was the case at first. But, when I tried talking to her it was amusing, so after that I thought of her as friend. Well, I don't know how Miranda is thinking about me though. Now then, let's return to my story.」

What made me curious was Princess Lianne's words about that woman's big brother.

「Lyle-dono, I understand from meeting you face to face like this. You are still not insane.」

「Eh?」

「To be more accurate, I mean that you haven't been driven crazy by that woman—Celes.」

Miranda-san's eyes turned sharp.

「Is the palace's situation horrible just as I thought?」

「It's horrible. The knights of Faunbeux were turned putty just by a single meeting with Celes. Celes's popularity is high even in the capital.」

The Fifth was shocked.

『The child of evil god that the First mentioned……could it be it's not actually wrong?』

Someone who was possessed by the evil god.

The child of evil god.

An existence that appeared in the turning point of the era and pushed the continent into chaos.

I muttered.

「—Child of evil god.」

Princess Lianne was shocked.

「Oh, you knew that? That's right, if it's that Celes then it won't be strange even if she is called the child of evil god. That child—that woman, she seduced Rufus in front of my eyes.」

The crown prince who everyone had high hope for as the next king—his highness Rufus Bahnseim. The one who seduced him was my little sister Celes.

I felt faint hearing that fact.

In the middle the talk, Novem was more surprised by my words rather than the fact about Celes.

「Lyle-sama, where did you hear that story?」

「Eh?」

「The story of child of evil god. Where did you hear it? Normally you won't connect the two like that.」

「Ah, no……where was it again? Perhaps it was from Ojii-sama.」

Novem stared at me.

The Seventh was,

『I only knew of the child of evil god as a mere fairy tale though?』

Even so, I could only say that I heard it from the Seventh if I had to explain where did I learn it from.

Miranda-san looked puzzled.

「That's a fairy tale isn't it? I once also heard about the child of evil god but……what is the relation of that with Celes?」

Princess Lianne explained to her.

「The child of evil god that appeared in the fairy-tale received power from the evil god and played mischief with it. But existence like Agrissa who pushed the continent into chaos at the past, it seemed such existence was also called the child of the evil god. Lyle-dono is knowledgeable aren't you?」

Miranda-san comprehended it.

「Well, it feels like there can be connection if it's like that. In the fairy-tale, the child of evil god committed bad deed and at the end he got tricked by the evil god and lost his life. The original material was something like that wasn't it?」

Novem looked at me.

「It's like that. That's why, it was surprising that Lyle-sama called Celes-sama as child of the evil god.」

……It felt like she was doubting me for some reason.

「Pe, perhaps I read it in a book.」

Novem was looking at me, so I returned the talk to Princess Lianne.

「Tha, that's, what happened after his highness was seduced?」

Princess Lianne gazed at me while gradually directing hostility at me. The Sixht's Art was telling me that her hostility was swelling.

The map of the mansion inside my head—the light dot that was placed in front of me was changing from yellow to red, and then it transformed further from red to muddy red that looked blazing.

I could sense how her killing intent was swelling up.

Monica was about to move. At the same time, the knights standing by around us were also moving to unsheathe their sword. There,

「……Right after that, Rufus annulled our engagement just like Celes told him to do. I wonder which party it was. Each time Celes who made her appearance in the high society came to the capital, Rufus's heart would be thrown out of order.」

The first time it was at the level of Celes being in his mind.

However, from the second time……it seemed the crown prince became madly in love with Celes.

At the third time apparently he confessed that he was in love with Celes in front of Princess Lianne.

……Frankly speaking it was abnormal.

「I even want to praise him that he managed to resist that Celes for two times. That's why, even now I'm remaining here hoping that perhaps Rufus will open his eyes. But, even that has come to an end. I ran out of time.」

「Ran out of time?」

「The instruction telling me to return back has come. We will be busy after this.」

The Fifth's words pained my chest.

『This won't end with just a skirmish. It's unknown just how many people will die just because of Celes alone.』

A war would begin at the border with Faunbeux.

Because of Celes's fault, a lot of people would die.

Princess Lianne looked at me.

She was looking at me with eyes that had no light, but something black inside.

「I'm amazed that you were able to stay sane. No, could it be, you are actually mad and I simply cannot sense it? There isn't a single decent person around Celes.」

The Seventh noticed from hearing that.

『……So even Maizel and Claire, were driven mad by Celes.』

The two in my memory when I was a child, and the two in reality before I got driven out of the house.

They were completely different, was because Celes driving them mad?

I pressed my hand on my chest. Miranda-san placed her hand on my shoulder.

「Wait, are you alright?」

Novem was also similar. She was worried for me, and then she strengthened her vigilance toward the surrounding.

Princess Lianne looked down and smiled slightly.

I could only see her lips but, her face with the corner of her lips raised didn't look lovely but insane.

「My, pardon me. I caused everyone to be wary.」

Her hostility was gradually vanishing and the color of her light dot was returning from red to yellow.

「……When I return back, I will receive a difficult treatment. Perhaps I'll be called as the stupid princess who got her fiancée stolen. Anyway, I won't be welcomed there.」

She would receive difficult treatment even if she returned.

It would be pointless even if she stayed here.

Princess Lianne talked to us about the situation at Faunbeux.

「I'll teach you something interesting. It's a story from before I returned back to the country. I had told everyone all the time about Celes's abnormality, but no one would believe me. Even if there is Art to seduce other people, the result like right now would be impossible, they said.」

Miranda-san couldn't believe that.

「That's a lie right? Because, in reality the situation is this—」

「Amazing isn't it? Even the neighboring countries don't notice the abnormality. Although there are nobles who say that the engagement is annulled because I'm useless, it seems they don't consider Celes a threat. At best, they only think of her as a country toppling beauty perhaps? The most they think about this is that it will be advantageous if Bahnseim's national power drop from this.」

Even after Celes was displaying her abnormality to this degree, not to mention the surrounding countries, even the people inside this country wasn't feeling an sense of danger.

The Fourth suggested.

『Faunbeux is making light of this? No, that's not it. In this case……perhaps Celes has that kind of ability, or perhaps the people who came into contact with her were simply ensnared and harbored good will toward her. When listening to the story about this, they won't believe it if it's only from hearsay, while when they heard about the story from someone who had come into contact with Celes, they might be telling nothing but good thing about Celes.』

The Third concluded it into a sentence.

『H~m, this is troublesome.』

Princess Lianne looked at us while making a thin smile.

「It will be stormy in Bahnseim from now on. If you're going to escape then I recommend to another country at minimum. If not then it will be dangerous.」

「if Lianne-sama make that judgment, then perhaps it's not wrong. And, what is your plan from now?」

「I'll leave this mansion when the snow melt. I won't return anymore to this place, and even if I return, it will be the day Faunbeux attack Centralle and burn it to the ground.」

The Sixth concluded the talk in a way that I could understand.

『In other words, Faunbeux will be observing Bahnseim that is in chaos due to Celes. Depending on the situation, it seems they have the will to invade and aim at the capital.』

The Seventh made a pained voice.

『The countries that are bordered with this country won't just stay quiet. It'll be dangerous to stay inside this country.』

The Fifth also showed a strong interest.

『Setting aside the capital noble, I'm curious to what the feudal lords are thinking. Lyle, ask about it in detail.』

「Lianne-sama, do you know about the situation with the feudal lords within Bahnseim Kingdom?」

「Are you curious? I think there is no point even if you know about it but, it's amusing so I'll tell you. First, there are feudal lords who are worried about Celes. There are also a lot of them who're making light of her. These two groups are the majority. A part of them are strengthening their vigilance and also protested to the palace.」

It seemed there were also proper feudal lords, but it seemed the palace right now wouldn't respond even if there was protest.

「There are also a lot of feudal lords who cannot move even if they notice the abnormality. Right now they're persisting in waiting and seeing how the wind blows. If I have to say what do I think, then it looks like it'll be impossible for the nobles to unite and take down Celes.」

The Fifth listened to the talk and grasped the situation.

『Guess so. There must be a lot of guys who are troubled of what to decide.』

The Third also agreed.

『When push comes to shove, feudal lords who change sides to other country will also appear. This is rough.』

An indescribable feeling was ruling over my heart.

My chest felt strangely painful.

The Fourth was concerned about me.

『……Could it be that Lyle lost his memory, was also related with Celes?』

The Seventh agreed strongly.

『That's likely enough. If Maizel and Claire went mad, then it wouldn't be strange no matter what happened. But, in that case there is one thing bothering me. Celes was hating Lyle wasn't she?』

The ancestors knew about Celes hating me.

Because I had told them everything.

But, here there was one curious thing. The arrogant and overbearing Celes—someone who seduced even the crown prince. Why would someone like that left me alone?

She should hate me so much she wanted to kill me.

She didn't want to dirty her own hand? No, when I fought that fellow, I certainly felt killing intent from her. She also wasn't someone who would hesitate from killing human.

……Why did she leave me alone?

Was it related with me having no memory?

I didn't understand everything.

Princess Lianne erased her smile and made a slightly sad face.

「……When I return back to my country, I will act on my own. I also can't forgive Rufus who discarded me but, I can't forgive that woman

even more. When I return back, I will be treated not as princess but as a divorced woman returning back to her parents, so it will be really busy.」

Even if it wasn't Princess Lianne's fault that the betrothal annulment happened, the surrounding wouldn't see it like that. As a divorced woman—a woman whose betrothal was annulled and returned back, people who were holding her in contempt would also appear.

It was unknown whether she would be able to calm down after returning back.

No, it seemed the person herself had no intention of calming down.

Apparently she was planning to do something with the burning vengeful heart inside her chest.

「I'm glad I can talk with you today. I can't tell you to let's meet again but, I want to avoid having a reunion with each other in the battlefield.」

The talk ended and we left the mansion.

—Inside the Jewel.

The ancestors were talking to each other without Lyle present.

The Fourth was wiping his glasses' lenses with a troubled look.

『Now then, what to do now.』

The Sixth crossed his arms and made a serious look.

『The previous Lyle was completely helpless against Celes but, the problem is if the current Lyle can win against her or not.』

The Seventh pressed his forehead with his hand in distress.

『Not wanting to make brother and sister kill each other, is a naïve thinking huh.』

From the Seventh's perspective, the two of them were his cute grandchildren.

Lyle and Celes fighting—killing each other was something he didn't even want to think about.

The Third shrugged.

『It will bring nothing but trouble even if we get involved, it'll be better to just head to other country.』

The Fifth heard the mention of other country and immediately recalled Beim.

Beim was located at the east from where Bahnseim Kingdom was. Because there were several countries between them, it could be said to be the ideal place to escape to.

『I had gone to the eastern part of Bahnseim several times, but I often heard about Beim. It seems to be a big metropolis where you can earn a lot from commerce. There're also a lot of adventurers there, but I heard that it's the merchants who are holding the authority.』

The Third seemed to have a question.

『Did you have some kind of business at the east?』

『……My wives came from the eastern part.』

The Fifth—Fredericks kept five women at his side. Because of that, the later generation knew of him as a lecher.

His legal wife and mistresses were all from the east.

The Fourth was nostalgic.

『The east was a territory where martial arts were popular.』

The Third tilted his head in confusion.

Weihs territory was located at the southern part of Bahnseim Kingdom.

He must felt it strange that there was an interaction there with the eastern part.

『That's unexpected. Obaa-chan came from the northern part, and Kaa-san also had no relation with the eastern part. Passetto also didn't come from the eastern part.』

The Fifth talked about that time.

『Around that time various things happened at the east, many nobles evacuated from there.』

The Fourth was glaring at the Fifth.

『Certainly there were various things. Really, a lot of "various things".』

The two didn't touch this topic anymore than that.

The Third returned to the topic.

『That child Celes, her influence to her surrounding is big and she is also stronger than Lyle. This is a definite information. It's to the degree that even Miranda-chan said that she cannot win, so I think she is really strong but……perhaps they can manage somehow.』

Wouldn't it be possible depending on their method?

That was what the Third meant. The Fifth snapped at him.

『You were the one who said to not get involved. Certainly there might be a way to fight her but, we don't know anything about Celes so we don't know how judge it.』

Everyone's gaze gathered on the Seventh.

The Seventh noticed and answered.

『My answer remain the same no matter how many times I'm asked. The Celes that I know was a cute granddaughter. I don't know if she has some kind of Art, and I also don't know anything about what happened after that.』

The Seventh couldn't feel anything that could be said as strange when he was alive.

『……My memory was only until I let go of the Jewel. My memory is cut off from there, so I can only say that there must be something happened after that.』

Just what in the world happened?

The ancestors also couldn't find any answer—.

That day was really sunny.

While walking on the road, the snow piled up at the roadside reflected the sunlight dazzlingly.

「It has been so long since the weather is this good.」

When Eva-san said that, Shannon took off her muffler.

「Somehow it feels hot. The outside is dazzling.」

「The snow is reflecting the sunlight.」

「Is that so?」

Shannon was impressed by Eva-san's knowledge. She was walking on the street with a good mood.

The three of us were going outside was because Eva-san recalled a talk from before.

—Let's go out with the three of us.

I who returned back from the mansion of Princess Lianne had a lot of things to think about in the inn.

Eva-san was worried for me who was like that and this might be her consideration toward me.

「Lyle is still thinking about various things?」

I was happy that she was concerned for me.

「Well, yeah.」

But, knowing that my little sister—Celes was pushing this country into a dangerous situation, I now didn't know what to do.

Would it be alright for me to escape to Beim like this?

Was I really……alright with the thing being like this?

The answer wouldn't appear.

Shannon puffed up her chest. The chest that didn't have any bulge at all made me sad looking at it.

「I know about this. This kind of thing is called Inadequate ideas are worse than none at all isn't it? Monica taught me.」

Eva-san was laughing.

「Monica is really amusing. I never get bored hearing her story. Aa~, I'm really glad I entered this party.」

The two of them were all smiles.

The Fourth was slightly exasperated with me.

『Lyle, you can't make the two of them worry. Be more confident and look happy.』

The Fourth told me to smile for the two's sake. I wanted to retort back that I wasn't feeling like it but—certainly, I didn't want to worry them.

「……Where should we go today?」

When I raised a topic, Shannon waved both her hands and appealed.

「Yes! Ye~s! I want to listen to song! And also various stories!」

Eva-san puffed her cheeks at Shannon's request.

「Is my song unsatisfactory?」

「I want to listen to one in the proper place rather than just song practice!」

Did she mean she wanted to go listening to a singer on stage?

Shannon looked down.

「Because, I couldn't go to that kind of place until now.」

Shannon was forced into a life house arrest when she was living in the capital with her eyes blind. She was unable to walk around outside.

Eva-san said 「In that case」 and,

「Then, I'll introduce you to a bar where the elves gathered. But, it's still not open at this time, so let's look around until then.」

Shannon raised one of her hand high.

「Agree! Ah, Lyle will carry the baggage.」

「……You, do you hate me that much?」

Damn Shannon grinned while nodding.

.

We went around the capital with the three of us.

We bought and eat foods from various stalls, looked inside some stores and shopped.

Even though that was all we did, it was really fun.

I quarreled with Shannon, fought for sweets with each other……I wonder why. Perhaps it was great to not need be considerate.

The time became evening while we were doing that.

Soon it would be time for the bar to open.

We came to a stall that sold accessory for the last.

Eva-san and Shannon were looking at the items.

「Eva-san is also interested?」

It wasn't good to say this but, it wasn't a place that was handling expensive merchandise. And yet, Eva-san was observing seriously. I was curious.

「It will become souvenir when going around the village. Girls will be happy with this, and there're various designs here so it's not boring to look at them.」

Other than accessories, there were also combs and hairclips in display.

Shannon was staring fixedly at one of them/

It was a brooch.

Eva-san poked at me with her elbow. When I looked at her face, it was like she was telling me 「Buy it for her」.

……I should buy it?

While I was hesitating, the ancestors were booing at me.

『Buy it for her.』

『It's not even anything expensive.』

『……I think it's better if you buy it.』

『Lyle, it's just this cheap thing. You should know that in my case I had to buy gems several hundred gold coins worth in order to please my wives.』

『Wouldn't it be better if the Sixth reflect on yourself more? Lyle, buy it for her. Rather, do you intend to not buy it in this situation? From Ojii-chan's view, that's an unbelievable thing to do you know? 』

—Ignoring the Sixth's opinion, everyone was saying that it was better to buy it.

They must be thinking a lot about Shannon's upbringing and so on.

I took out money from my wallet and,

「Give me one—」

『Stu~pid! Lyle you stupid!』

The Third warned me.

『There is also Eva-chan here. You at least need to buy the items she was looking at before.』

The Fourth added.

『Later let's buy presents for everyone else too. Don't buy the same things.』

The Fifth was getting even more fussy than normal.

『Make it so the presents has similar price. Don't make one present superior than other. After that, buy after thinking whether it will suit the person. Before thinking about the sense of choosing present and so on, it's important to buy for the sake of the other party. Choose the item they're usually mentioning as something they want.』

……Why was he talking about this kind of minor details?

I also purchased the bracelet that Eva-san was looking at.

「……This brooch, and this bracelet too please.」

「Thank you for your patronage.」

The shop owner grinned at me.

「Lad, you're bringing cute girls with you. Is that elf girl over there your lover?」

…….Apparently he was misunderstanding.

I thought to correct him.

「That's no—」

「That's right. That's why, make it cheap okay?」

Eva-san said that with a smile. The shop owner said 「Can't be helped」 and lowered the price slightly. It was really just slightly.

「Tha, that's」

「Don't mind it. There won't be any end to it if you're answering seriously to every single thing.」

Eva-san said that. She then stared at the bracelet I gave her.

Shannon was looking up to me.

When I handed her the brooch, I thought that she would say something like 「Aren't you attentive」 or 「Well, I guess I'll accept it」, and yet…….

「……Tha, thank you.」

She held the brooch with both hands and her cheeks blushed.

「Eh? Why are you happy? Usually you'll say something like 『Guess I'll accept it』 right?」

「Now I understand how you are looking at me.」

For some reason I was relieved when she returned to the usual Shannon.

When I laughed, she thought that I was making fun of her and hit me repeatedly.

「Don't laugh!」

Chapter 84 – Fellow Student

The bar that was under the management of the elves was bustling with a lot of customers.

A small stage was prepared inside the bar where the performers exhibited their craft.

There were also elves coming out to perform their song.

The live music of the elves were flowing inside the bar without pause. The bar felt really fun.

「Is it alright, for us to come here?」

Eva-san was eating foods one after another.

「They greatly welcome customer. If you have a request then tells the staff. If you pay money then they will perform any art or song on the stage. ……It's a bit expensive though.」

Shannon was watching the show of the elves with clenched hands and a serious face.

She only ate the foods a bit and then she didn't even glance at them anymore.

I heard the cheers and applauses of the customers. It seemed the show had reached a break and the performing elves were retiring to the stage's wing.

When a gentle music was starting to flow inside the bar, a waiter came.

Looking closer, the waiter was a female elf wearing male clothes.

「Eva, you really eat a lot. Even if you're a fellow elf we will still charge you the same okay?」

The female elf had short hair and she was a beauty, but she was a cool type and looked good even in male outfit.

Eva-san wiped her mouth while ordering more food.

「It's fine. Right now my wallet is fat. Even though I'm also bringing in good customers like his, is it alright that your attitude toward me is like that?」

「Oh, are they that rich? Then, how about requesting something? Today a popular singing is present you know?」

When the show was over, Shannon was starting to drink juice. Her eyes turned bright when she heard about making request.

The Fourth said,

『Lyle.』

Hearing his voice, I thought that here they go again while asking for that person.

「How much?」

「It will be one gold coin. Well, there are also people with reasonable price, so with one silver coin—」

The woman seemed to think that I wouldn't be able to afford it. She was starting to introduce other elf.

When I took out one gold coin from my wallet, the woman's attitude changed.

「Dear customer……how about switching from Eva to me? Even though I look like this I'm good at singing and dancing.」

「Don’t promote yourself. Do your work quickly.」

The woman reluctantly returned. After a while an elf came out.

The surrounding customers began to make noise.

「Oi, it’s Lilim.」

「Someone paid a big money.」

「Haa……she is beautiful no matter how many times I see her.」

The elf’s blonde hair almost reached the floor. She was wearing a dress. The woman had her eyes closed. Her long ears that were the characteristic of elf were wearing earring. She was slender and had a good style.

She elegantly bowed and began to sing a song.

Her singing voice was really beautiful. It sounded clear, it really reached into the ear……even I clearly understood her difference compared to all the performers until now.

Shannon was also entranced by her voice.

Eva-san let out a mutter in respond to the singing voice that grasped everyone’s heart.

「One day I’ll surpass her.」

I thought that Eva-san’s singing was also skilled but, apparently there were still people who surpassed her among the elves.

When the song was over and applauses filled the bar, the woman faced this way and smiled while waving her hand. Shannon was responding by waving her hand energetically.

While the customers were rejoicing, a voice that put a damper on the excitement came from the Jewel.

『One gold coin for ten minutes is expensive. It would be better if the prince is just one silver coin.』

……It was the Fourth.

Certainly it was expensive, but I felt glad that I listened to that singing voice.

「It's amazing. I can't say nothing else but that it's amazing.」

Eva-san also agreed with my impression but……she didn't look amused.

「She is a big veteran after all. The difference of a hundred years cannot be covered easily.」

Shannon asked back.

「Eh? A hundred years?」

Eva-san was chuckling.

「Elf has long life. In addition their appearance is also youthful. Well, we ourselves will understand who is elderly just from looking though.」

It seemed that it wasn't strange even if an elf was more than a hundred years old. Lilim-san just now was a big veteran more than a hundred years old. It seemed that she was an influential figure even among the elves.

Eva-san asserted to us.

「One day I'll surpass that person and become number one. I'll make it a reality without fail while Lyle and others are still alive.」

「…..I, I'm cheering for you.」

I see. Even after we died, Eva-san alone would continue to live.

Shannon made a taken aback expression in realization.

「Eh, could it be, Eva is also really old?」

「Rude. I'm still 16 years old!」

It would be troubling if she said that she was 30 or 40 years old.

I didn't know what kind of reaction I should make in that case.

Until now I interacted with her casually because I thought of her as someone the same age but—it would be impolite if she was actually far older than me.

After that, our additional food order was brought to us.

Eva-san talked about her dream.

「One day I'll sing about a tale that is only known by me. Anyway I'll travel throughout the continent to see with my own eyes and hear with my own ears, and then I'll turn them into song. I'm also interested with the 【princess knight】 at the north. If we're heading to Beim, I also want to meet with the 【saint】. The two 【war maidens】 are also famous. There should be a lot of heroes too whose name I don't know yet!」

Shannon showed interest.

「Somehow there are a lot of amazing alias there!」

「Recently there are especially many female hero. Perhaps they're standing out because their number is few but, I heard that there is also amazing person at the south!」

Eva-san said that one day she wanted to meet with the heroes and heard their story. Her eyes were shining bright while saying that.

The Sixth showed interest.

『Hou, female hero huh. If they're beautiful then I want to try meeting them.』

The Seventh was exasperated.

『It's common sense that kind of female hero is more burly than even man.』

We continued enjoying the food with the three of us like that before leaving the bar.

—Miranda was in the middle of returning to the inn.

She was going home after buying the necessary tools.

She stopped walking and turned around.

「Oh, so you finally make a move?」

Renard was there.

「Ojou-sama, there is something that I wish to tell you.」

「What? If you want to tell me to return then—」

「No, I hope that you will leave the capital immediately. Or else please don't go out at all and wait until the storm pass.」

Miranda guessed what Renald wanted to say. He was telling her to leave in this period where they couldn't move, and then it was also strange for him to mention a "storm" at this season—.

「So Celes is coming.」

「Yes. She arrived yesterday.」

The group of Walt House that was travelling while snow was falling managed to enter the capital as though it was nothing at all.

「They were earlier than expected. I intended to tell Ojou-sama before they arrived but, please forgive me that I don't make it in time.」

Miranda wanted to tsked but she endured it.

(If possible I don't want to meet her. Our only choice is to forcefully depart tomorrow or stay inside the inn.)

「I understand. Even so, why are they coming to the capital in this time?」

「……That's」

When Renald said what he knew, Miranda was speechless from shock—.

On our way home.

We were leaving the main street and walking on a street that was lined up with warehouses.

The shortcut to return to the inn was by passing through this warehouse district.

River was flowing nearby. This location enabled the use of water transport.

Few people were passing through here.

「Aa~, it was fun. I want to go there again.」

The satisfied Shannon was walking while swinging around her arms.

「I want to go there with everyone before we leave. Lyle also had fun it seems, that's great.」

「Eh, ah……yeah.」

Eva-san's face became slightly red. And then before her smile, I spoke in affirmation. But, it was really fun.

I felt like a bit of tension slightly left my shoulder.

「What kind of son should I listen to next?」

Shannon was looking forward to the next time. When I smiled just a little bit seeing that, Eva-san nodded.

「As I thought a smile is the best. Lyle, you are cute when you're smiling.」

「Cu, cute!?」

「Yep. Normally you are somewhat unreliable, but you're cool when you get serious, and your smile is cute. This is a praise from me you know?」

I was happy but, it was a bit embarrassing.

Shannon objected.

「Ee~, he is unreliable, an idiot, and his smile looks like he is making fun of other people. He is no good.」

「That's only when I'm with you.」

When I talked back, Shannon approached me and tried to hit me. However, she slipped on the freezing ground before reaching me.

「Watch out, you'll slip. If you aren't care—ful」

I caught Shannon and helped her to stand up on her feet. It was then the figures of several people heading this way entered my sight.

My body couldn't move for a moment. Eva-san seemed to think that I was acting strange and talked to me.

「Lyle?」

Ahead of my gaze was my senior apprentice from the same martial art school, Alfred Virden. His silky black hair was fluttering while he walked.

He was tall and a saber was hanging on his waist.

His outfit was a slightly showy outfit often wore by noble. He wore a coat that looked like a poncho. He was walking this way.

Behind him were the soldiers of Walt House.

The soldiers received training and had full time occupation as soldier—they weren't the population who got conscripted.

They too also noticed me.

「That blue hair and eyes……I remember that. You, are Lyle huh.」

Alfred sent a cold gaze toward me.

I stepped forward to hide Shannon and Eva-san behind me. Then the Seventh's low voice talked to me.

『This brat from Virden House, he dare calling Lyle without honorific!』

The Third recalled something when he heard Virden House got mentioned.

『Virden House? Ah, come to think of it that's the house who got entrusted with managing the gambling den at our territory. Hee, so they became knight?』

The Fourth was surprised.

『……Eh? Please wait a second. I never heard anything like that.』

『I didn't tell you after all. You know, there was a gambling den at our territory right? It was Virden House that was managing it. Eh? You appointed them as knight without knowing about that? There was income from the gambling den right?』

『I didn't know, and there wasn't any income like that at my era! Do you know just how much trouble it was not knowing who was managing the gambling den for so long!?』

The Fifth was enraged.

『Oi, wait. The one who created the troublesome organization inside our territory, don't tell me—it was Virden House?』

The Sixth was feeling indignation.

『So they didn't have any hostility to harm us because their objective was to make use of us huh. That was why my Art didn't react. These damn parasites!』

The Seventh was also speaking with a voice containing anger.

『I got outwitted no matter how many countermeasures I prepared. So it was because there was traitor at my side. Lyle, cut down this guy! Beat the hell out of him! We give you permission!』

I didn’t understand just what they were talking about. There the Fourth explained to me.

『A criminal organization exist in the territory of Walt House. It’s an organization that is doing various things behind the scene. No matter how many countermeasures we prepared, the information of our side would be leaked and they would escape. But, I can understand how that happen if Virden House is involved.』

The Fifth who was showing his anger yelled angrily at the Third.

『Why didn’t you say anything!? Because of these guys’ clan, we were!』

『No, it’s troubling even if you say that to me. Because I—died in battle.』

Nobody could say anything back.

I heard the sound of the Fourth hitting the table.

『At the time of confusion when I just took over the family headship, the first one to come to the mansion to help out with tidying up the mansion was the people of Virden House. Thinking back now, they might came to collect the proof in the mansion.』

The Third was making excuse.

『Someone had to be made to manage that business, and I also prepared a written contract between them and Walt House.

To think that they would hide it after my death and did various other things, I never thought they would do that.』

If Lundberg House was a clan of loyal retainer, than Virden House was a clan that was making use of Walt House.

But, right now rather than talking about that…….

「As I thought. It's the disgrace of Walt House. You've guts to appear in front of us.」

Thinking that it would be better to not fight in this place, I tried to leave this place with the other two in tow.

However, their hands took out their weapon.

Alfred unsheathed his saber while the three soldiers behind him unsheathed short sword and surrounded us three.

Shannon was surprised.

「Eh, what!?」

Eva-san hugged Shannon to protect her. And then she stood back to back with me.

「Lyle, your acquaintance is seething with killing intent though! Just what had you done?」

「……I didn't do anything.」

Alfred scowled hearing what I said.

「You didn't do anything you say? Your existence itself is a stain toward Celes-sama! To meet you here today must be the guidance of the goddess telling me to kill you.」

I understood that he was seriously trying to kill me.

『What's with this guy? Saying things like stain or goddess's guidance……his head isn't screwed right.』

The Third was utterly amazed, but the situation was bad.

The three soldiers surrounding us were trained soldiers.

I gritted my teeth and snapped my fingers.

A magic circle manifested on the ground and two sabers flew out from inside. I grabbed each of them with both hands.

Seeing that, Alfred was laughing condescendingly at me.

「It seems you've gotten good in doing magic trick. It make me want to vomit when I think that you're my fellow student but, I'll personally take you on. You guys, you can do whatever you like with the two behind him.」

When Alfred stepped forward and closed the distance, the soldiers also started moving toward Eva-san and Shannon.

「—In this kind of place!」

My saber and Alfred's saber clashed and scattered sparks around.

When Alfred's coat fluttered from the impact, I could see the short sword hanging on his waist.

It was a short sword that I had seen before.

「Where did you get that short sword!?」

Alfred was surprised for a moment at my anger, even so he honestly answered.

「It's a present from Celes-sama. Originally a trio of seedy adventurers had it. But, Celes-sama obtained it and gave it to me as a reward—」

「—What happened?」

「Aa?」

「What happened to those three!?」

The short sword Alfred carried belonged to Rondo-san, an adventurer I got acquainted with at Dalien. The short sword was a magic tool that was especially made.

It wasn't something that he would let go easily.

Alfred slashed at me while,

「Aa, they died. Celes-sama killed them. Those three were lucky. Though I killed one of them.」

I pushed Alfred back and then slashed at him with my saber. I stepped forward deeply and attacked, but it only grazed Alfred's cheek because he stepped back.

Alfred checked the scratch on his cheek and his face twisted.

I pointed the tip of the saber in my right hand.

「I absolutely won't forgive you.」

—Miranda who hurriedly returned to the inn found Sophia at the first floor.

「Sophia, where is everyone?」

「Lyle-dono's group and Aria hasn't returned back. Also, Lily-san came here., She want to talk with Lyle-dono no matter what, so she asked for him to come outside the wall.」

「Aria is alone?」

「Yes. But, she only went out to buy something nearby, she said that she will return quickly—」

The inn's door opened and Aria appeared there.

「I'm back.」

「Aria, I have something to talk about so come here for a bit.」

Miranda called at Aria. Aria talked about the situation outside.

「More importantly listen to this. It seems there's a fight happening outside. It's near from here.」

Sophia went upstairs to call the other members.

「Fight?」

「I don't see it directly. But, it seems it's a fight between adventurer and knight. People said it's around the warehouse district. The people who saw it is scared.」

Miranda got a bad feeling.

「Hey, what is the characteristic of those people?」

「I didn't hear until that much.」

Then Novem and others came down to the first floor.

「What's the matter?」

Miranda told Novem the information she heard from Renald.

「—Celes-sama is in the capital?」

「Yes. Let's discuss it when Lyle returns. If possible, I want to leave immediately from this kind of place.」

Clara looked outside.

「Aren't Lyle-san and others late? It's unthinkable that they're walking outside until this late even though Shannon-chan is with them.」

Monica was also worried.

「Normally it won't be strange for them to return already at this time.」

Miranda recalled Aria's story.

(Don't tell me Lyle and others are?)

When she thought to go outside to check, the inn's door opened and guests came in. The duo were talking with slight excitement.

「A fight between knight and adventurer isn't something you can find that often.」

「Spare me from getting caught into it. It'll be the end if the noble fixed their sight on you.」

Miranda approached the duo.

「Can I hear about that story a little bit more?」

「Ye, yes.」

「Did you see the adventurer who was in that fight?」

「I saw. He has blue hair. There was also an elf and a small girl—」

Right after that Monica dashed out of the inn. Aria yelled.

「Hey! Wait a second!」

Miranda immediately ran toward her room.

「Aria and Sophia take your weapon and go to the warehouse district. Clara, come with me. Novem—」

Clara pointed at the door.

「She went already.」

Miranda clicked her tongue—.

—Lionel came to the warehouse district while wandering in the capital.

He was in a small gap that was created between the warehouses lining up.

He sat down to hide himself there in order to endure the cold.

But, there was no way he could endure with that. He was shivering.

「Cold.」

While shivering in such place, he heard the sound of metals clashing. He could hear people's voice too, but Lionel was familiar with that metallic sound.

It was the sound that he heard in battlefield.

「A fight?」

When he peeked out from the alley, there was Lyle there.

「Tha, that guy! ……Hm?」

Lyle was protecting someone and couldn't fight fully.

The body of Lyle who was facing four people was covered with cut wounds.

Lionel made an ugly smile and watched the fight—.

.

When I deflected Alfred's thrust with my saber, next the soldiers showed a feign of them attacking Eva-san and Shannon.

When I turned my focus there, Alfred quickly slashed at me again.

It was really hard to fight. Eva-san was unarmed. Naturally Shannon didn't carry any weapon.

Alfred was grinning at me.

He was fighting in a way to harass me.

「Shit-!」

Eva-san called out to me who couldn't fight satisfactorily.

「Lyle, even I can at least use magic. Anyway, I'll crush the soldiers first.」

The soldiers were smirking.

「This is one strong-willed elf.」

「Magic huh. It will also depend on the level but—」

「Come on, just try it!」

Eva-san faced the self-assured soldiers and fired her magic.

Wind blew roughly to the surrounding and attacked the soldiers.

Then, one soldier stepped forward and took a defensive stance. With one person blocking the magic, the other two circled around to attack Eva-san.

「—No way!」

「That magic isn't really lethal! Don't think that you will get us with just that much!」

The soldier moved to stab Eva-san with his short sword, so I cut in and kicked one soldier flying.

I deflected the other one's short sword with saber.

But, while I was doing that Alfred's saber grazed my shoulder.

「Doing that again!」

The soldier I kicked away immediately stood up while the other one recovered the short sword he let go and took a stance right away. Their movement was different from the bandit and adventurer I had faced until now.

I heard a conflicted impression from the Jewel.

『Good grief, they're reliable but it's troublesome when they turn into enemy.』

The Fifth expressed his impression. Rather than asking for advice I was more bothered by the short sword Alfred had.

Eva-san hugged Shannon.

「These guys aren't right in the head. It's crazy that they leaped in front of magic.」

It seemed that the soldiers of Walt House were trained well.

I took a deep breath.

Alfred gave instruction to the soldiers.

「Do it.」

The soldiers headed this way.

「……Thunder Clap.」

I lifted my saber and made lightning fell with magic. It produced intense light and sound. The snow piled up on the ground was blown away.

Snow whirled up and blocked the sight. During that time I carried Eva-san and Shannon on my shoulders and dashed away.

Shannon who was being shouldered looked at Alfred and yelled.

「Lyle, dodge!」

Something approached my back.

「What?」

The something that I felt with Art's power was a big arm.

I quickly leaped to the right and dodged, then a shape of hand was created at the place where we were standing. It was a big hand shape created on the snow.

The visibility was rapidly clearing up.

Alfred was smiling.

The soldiers were covering their ears. They were groveling on that place and couldn't move.

Alfred clicked his tongue seeing the soldiers like that.

「You guys, you call yourself a soldier of Walt House like that? But, the magic just now was surprising. Looks like all that sword and magic training you did like an idiot isn't a total waste. Even so, you aren't able to match even a single finger of Celes-sama.」

I put down Shannon and Eva-san. While I fixed my grip on my saber, Shannon pinched my clothes with her fingers and pulled.

「Lyle, that guy is strange. There is a person with only an upper body around him.」

「Person?」

There was no change to Alfred. But, my Art was also detecting something around him.

Mana was making the shape of a person that was protecting Alfred.

「……An Art huh.」

Alfred scowled.

「That's no good. I need to dispose a bad girl who blabbed about other person's Art here.」

Alfred licked his lips. Eva-san said 「Disgusting」 seeing that.

Right after that, the unseen giant behind Alfred reached out its hand.

「Die!」

I lowered my body and placed the saber higher than my shoulder—I altered the stance of the secret technique and then stepped forward like that before slashing the unseen arm while rotating midair.

「—Wha-!」

I approached while Alfred was shocked. He thrust with his saber so I deflected it. Alfred kicked so I intentionally got hit by it and was sent flying. Then I rolled on the snow right away while standing up.

I grinned in front of Alfred.

I showed the short sword my left hand was holding.

「My bad. I'll take this back.」

The saber in my left hand was stabbed into Alfred's thigh.

I stabbed it when getting kicked while taking back the short sword.

The Sixth laughed.

『Lyle, you're pretty dexterous! Now then, what to do about these guys—』

The kneeling Alfred scowled and glared at me.

「This worthless trash!」

Shannon yelled.

「Hih! The hands increased! Lyle, it got bit!」

I also felt it. The giant protecting Alfred became bigger and its hands increased to four. Alfred picked up the deflected saber and pulled out my saber that stabbed him while feeling pained.

「I'll tear you to pieces.」

After he said that, three hands of the giant made from Art reached out toward me. One arm picked a saber to stab me with it.

From a glance, it looked like a saber was floating in the air and approaching me but—.

If it could be seen then it wasn't a big deal.

I leaped over the arm trying to capture me and dashed toward Alfred. And then I punched him flying with my right hand that was gripping a saber.

With my body that was strengthened by Art, Alfred was sent flying far away and rolled on the snow.

I couldn’t exert all my strength before this because I was worried about the two, but now I could fight. I was anxious wondering if the soldiers got killed by my magic, but it seemed they were fine.

「……Stand up. You’re the enemy of Rondo-san and others. Don’t think it will be over just with this.」

The Fifth told me to be calm.

『Lyle, withdraw from here. You’ve taken back what should be taken. Take the two and run away.』

I ignored the Fifth’s opinion and stepped forward to approach Alfred. When I stepped on the snow that was dyed with blood, Alfred was laughing.

「Fool. You’re seriously a naïve brat.」

「What?」

「You’ve never killed a human huh. That’s why you didn’t cut me down at that time. If you cut me there, then you’ll still have hope right now.」

What was he saying?

The moment I thought that, a really extravagant horse carriage arrived to this place.

There were horse mounted knights around it, and there were also soldiers with them.

「……Walt House’s family crest.」

The crest of Walt House was drawn on the carriage.

Alfred who was bleeding from his nose looked at me and laughed.

「It’s over for you.」

The one who showed herself from the carriage was……Celes who I couldn’t possibly forget.

She was wearing a white fur coat and a hat. She got down on the snow and looked around.

The onlookers who were gathering to this place without me noticing gulped.

It was like a special air was enveloping Celes’s surrounding only.

My little sister who was annoyingly picturesque was carrying a sheathed rapier in her left hand.

While I couldn’t move, Alfred was crawling on the snow to Celes’s feet.

「Celes-sama, I found him. Lyle is—」

In the next moment, Celes unsheathed her rapier.

Celes looked down at Alfred.

「A knight of Walt House losing against that trash. Don’t you think that’s impossible?」

「—Eh?」

While Alfred was dumbfounded, the surrounding knights and soldiers were agreeing with Celes. They hurled insult at the man who was their comrade until now without any hesitation.

「He’s a disgrace of a knight.」

「I think that Walt House doesn’t need that kind of knight.」

「If I’m in his position then I’ll kill myself in this place.」

Alfred was unable to say anything back.

Shannon was crying.

「…..That person, is hopeless already. He is already cut.」

Eva-san hugged Shannon and calmed her down.

「What's wrong? Just what are you—」

Celes was walking this way. When she was apart from Alfred, there was the sound of something dripping down. Blood was spreading on the snow around Alfred, turning it red.

The Third was shocked.

『……When did she cut?』

The Sixth was recalling Shannon's words even while in shock.

『When Shannon said that he was cut, he was already……』

The Seventh was flustered.

『Who. Who the hell is that?』

The Fourth held doubt toward the Seventh's reaction.

『That girl is Celes isn't it?』

I nodded slightly.

However, the Seventh strongly denied it.

『It's like she's different! Even though she look the same, her atmosphere is different! Celes wasn't that kind of child!』

The Fifth said to me.

『……Lyle, run. Take the two of them and run, now!』

Celes looked at me and her moth widened in a grin that looked like crescent moon.

「Fo~und you.」

Chapter 85 – Child of Evil God

—Novem was hurrying.

Novem who was heading to the warehouse district had no composure at all. She was rushing in full speed.

(I've to hurry.)

However she suddenly stopped.

She stopped after sliding just for a bit on the snow and held up her silver staff.

「……Can I ask you to not get in my way, father.」

Standing there was Gerard Forxus—Novem's father.

「Long time no see, Novem.」

Novem who pointed her weapon to her actual father wanted to move right away.

But, Gerard told Novem.

「There's something that I should let you know.」

In front of her father who said that and started to talk, Novem lowered down her weapon—.

I never thought we would meet here.

「I didn't think that an useless garbage like you is still alive. As I thought, it's no good unless I properly dispose of you.」

My legs were shaking and my breathing was disordered.

I recalled my terror toward Celes.

Even though I wanted to take a stance, my body wouldn't move like I wanted.

『Lyle, what's wrong!? Move quickly! This is hopeless. Absolutely don't fight her!』

The Fifth's voice came from the Jewel.

The other ancestors were also telling me 「Run」.

Celes stood in front of me and smiled.

「Disappear.」

I was sent flying when I noticed.

I rolled on the ground and my right hand let go of my saber on the snow.

「Lyle!」

Eva-san and Shannon ran toward me and tried to help me stand.

When I looked at Celes, she was telling the soldiers around her to pick up the saber I dropped.

Celes held the two sabers of good quality with her hand—and crushed the blades with her bare hand.

「What's this. It's just blunt swords. Even though I thought you will be able to make me enjoy myself for a bit, you're really just a small fry.」

Eva-san talked to me who was trembling.

「Lyle, stand. We need to run away quickly.」

Celes was looking at me.

「I won't let you escape. Oh? Could it be that's an elf? That's right, I remember. I heard that elf is good at singing. I'll cut off her limbs and make her into a singing instrument for me alone.」

I didn't understand what she was saying. I could only think that her mind was screwed up.

The surrounding was giving nothing but praise to the laughing Celes.

「Wonderful idea.」

「That elf is really fortunate to become Celes-sama's belonging.」

「Then, let's quickly prepare—」

Celes looked at Shannon this time.

「Oh? The one over there is the rubbish isn't it? That's right, the rubbish of Circry House……eeh? Could it be, you now can see with your eyes?」

Shannon was scared.

She was unable to move with Celes in front of her.

「What, so fellow trashes are joining each other. Ah, come to think of it, where is your big sister? I don't need rubbish like you but, I really want that big sister of yours.」

Hearing that Shannon was,

「I, I'm not rubbish. We are—not rubbish!」

The Seventh talked from inside the Jewel.

『Lyle, stop her! Don't provoke Celes needlessly!』

Even though Celes looked like she was enjoying herself before, she turned expressionless.

「……What? A rubbish like you is arguing with me?」

Her voice was extremely cold.

Her gaze toward us was also the same.

Those were eyes as though she was looking at trash.

「My mood worsened. I'll kill the three of you here. How should I kill you three I wonder? Ah, that's right! It has been quite long so let's use fire! It's cold recently so surely it will make me warm. Let's burn you three with a big fire, just like that time I burned that old gardener!」

—My trembling stopped.

I lifted my face, and then I asked Celes who started to dance in that place innocently.

「—What did you do?」

Celes stopped still. She showed displeasure at my voice and looked my way.

「Aa?」

「Gardener old man you said? You can't mean Zel-ojiisan.」

I slowly stood up and pulled out a short sword from its sheath. I handed it to Eva-san. I placed Rondo-san's short sword into the sheath.

And then, I tightly grasped the Jewel.

「Who did you burn!?」

Celes laughed at my angry voice.

「The gardener……was his name Zel? That shitty old man. He was going to kick the bucket, so I burned him along with his eyesore hut. Eh? Could it be you're angry?」

Celes laughed, in contrast the Seventh made a sad voice.

『……Doing such thing to Zel……Celes, you're really』

I tightly grasped the Jewel with my left hand and changed its shape into bow. The silver bow showed up but, the Third was yelling.

『Lyle, why won't you escape!?』

Zel-jiisan was my life savior.

「You, only you, right here I'll!」

And then Rondo-san and others were my friends—there was no way I could forgive her.

Besides……the current me couldn't escape from Celes if I had to take along the other two.

I understood because I had fought her once.

The current Celes was different from the previous Celes. She was becoming even stronger.

「Hee, you have an interesting thing.」

When I readied the bow, an arrow of light appeared. It wasn't just one.

I materialized around ten simultaneously and fired the arrows without hesitation.

The power was too strong so I didn’t use it at the battle before this. But, I couldn’t hold back anything with Celes as my opponent.

When the arrows of light assaulted Celes, it collided on something invisible and exploded.

The Sixth clicked his tongue.

『An Art that specialize in defense huh.』

The Fourth couldn’t believe it.

『Then, Celes wasn’t using Art to lead people astray? That child having multiple Arts is—』

The Seventh was flustered.

『Don’t tell me……what Celes has is』

At that timing, Celes showed herself from inside the smoke that was caused by the explosion.

She was unharmed and grinning broadly.

「The attack just now is only flashy in appearance. Then, next is my turn.」

When Celes swung her rapier, cold air gathered right above her. White smoke was produced and ice appeared. The ice was rapidly growing bigger and obtaining shape.

It became the shape of a spear. A spear that even had detailed ornament was reproduced like a work of art.

From a glance I thought that thing was dangerous and pulled the bowstring of light as much as I could.

Celes pointed her rapier's tip toward me.

「I won't be able to have fun if you die just from this much but, that too will be interesting in its own way.」

The ice spear pointed at me and it was launched.

I fired an arrow in order to shoot it down. The spear and arrow collided and exploded. However, it seemed the spear was more powerful. The blast and cold air were blown my way powerfully.

The temperature of the surrounding drastically decreased.

I covered my face with my left arm, but when I moved the ice that was created on my body's surface made cracking sound. I became like this just from receiving the cold air.

It would be dangerous to get hit directly.

The road of the warehouse district was covered by white smoke. The scene that entered my eyes when it cleared up was—.

『Oi oi, this is a joke right?』

The scene that the Fifth didn't want to believe was the ice spears floating in the sky.

It wasn't just ten or something, spears in the number that surpassed a hundred were floating in the air with their tip pointed toward us.

I went to the position of Eva-san who was hugging Shannon. There the spears were coming down in succession from the sky.

「Come on, you will be skewered and frozen in ice if you don't run!」

The laughing voice of Celes sounded extremely unpleasant.

Each time a spear hit the ground, squall and chilling air would blow violently, worsening the field of vision.

I who came until the two's side took Rondo-san's short sword in my hand.

The two of them were trembling from the cold and couldn't even run away.

「Rondo-san……let me use this!」

The voices from the Jewel suddenly got disturbed.

A dome shaped wall of light was generated to envelop us three.

『Ly—run……away!』

I couldn't distinguish who was making the disordered voice from the Jewel.

I had heard that the affinity of Jewel and magic tool in general was bad, but this was certainly bad. The silver bow I was gripping was returning into a necklace.

A pattern was surfacing on the short sword's blade and shined. It was a magic tool containing an Art that specialized in defense.

The ice spears that were attacking one after another were continuously getting blocked by the wall of light protecting us.

Thanks to Rondo-san talking to me about the short sword, I could defend Celes's attack like this.

Eva-san talked to my back.

「Lyle, I'm sorry. Because we're here—」

「—It doesn’t matter.」

「Eh?」

「It doesn’t matter. It’s meaningless in front of Celes. Whether the two of you’re here or not, I’ll still be in disadvantage. Even escaping from here is—then, there’s no other way but to fight!」

I fired up myself.

Killing Rondo-san and others, burning Zel-jiisan……I couldn’t forgive her.

The wall of light enveloping us was gradually weakening.

The short sword was cracked. The magic tool went over its limit.

「Both of you. I’ll buy you time so—during that time!」

Shannon yelled.

「What about you!?」

「It’s no good if someone doesn’t stay behind!」

And then, the last ice spear crashed on the wall of light and blew it away.

The short sword broke into pieces. I held the Jewel with my right hand and summoned the silver great sword.

Due to the chilly air, the scenery around us was changed completely. No matter where I looked, there was only ice spreading through the street—Celes was waiting ahead.

「Celes!」

「Oh, this time it’s a large sword?」

Bluish white flame burst out from my body. The First's Art strengthened my body to the limit, then I used all the other Arts except the Seventh's.

I lifted up the Great Sword and leaped toward Celes. When I swung down, the shockwave broke the surrounding ice and blew them away.

Celes was standing on my great sword.

「Slo~w. You're really a trash.」

Immediately Celes's spinning kick hit me and I crashed on a warehouse's wall. I stood up right away and slashed with the great sword.

Celes avoided everything, and then she stabbed me with her rapier.

「Your wound is healing. Is that the power of your Jewel?」

The Sixth was surprised.

『This girl, just now—』

The Fourth muttered in frustration.

『I can't believe that even the current Lyle isn't her match.』

When I slashed up with the great sword, the generated impact destroyed the surrounding ice. The ice fragments were sparkling in the air.

Celes approached me.

「Well, you're just trash in the end. Even if you have the Arts of Walt House's ancestors, it's not a big deal. The ancestors too, they're just trash anyway because they side with you.」

Celes knew about the Jewel. And then, she spoke as though she also knew that the memory of the ancestors was revived.

But, what I couldn't forgive was—how she insulted the Jewel as trash.

Celes declared that even the ancestors were trash.

「YOUUUUUUU!」

「Ahahaha! You angry?」

『Lyle, calm down! More importantly, Celes knowing about the Jewel means that the yellow Gem that Celes has is—』

I ignored the Fifth's voice and slashed at Celes, even so it was dodged. Even when I slashed back, Celes blocked it with her bare hand. The great sword couldn't even twitch.

The Seventh yelled.

『Lyle, that's Zenoa's yellow Gem! I don't know where in the world she obtained it but, that thing is bad. If that's also a Jewel like yours—it has been existing since before Bahnseim Kingdom was founded!』

I poured my strength, but the great sword couldn't move at all.

「So yours is also a Jewel huh.」

Celes raised an eyebrow and showed her displeasure hearing the words I muttered.

「The same? Don't make fun of it. Unlike the failure over there, this Jewel is the real deal. The fake that you have seems to be a defective goods though.」

My anger was welling up even further at Celes mocking the Jewel as fake. It felt like she was making fun of the First and the Second who believed in me and disappeared.

「There is only one person in my Jewel.」

Celes kicked up the great sword. She closed the distance while my body greatly bent back. When I forcefully swung down the great sword, this time she swung her rapier.

The rapier's blade emitted heat. It was dyed red.

That blade hacked my great sword into pieces, destroying it apart.

「Do you think you will manage somehow with a weapon of that level!?」

Celes grabbed my head with her left hand, then she smacked my body on the wall before starting to run along the wall.

「Here, try enduring this!」

She greatly scraped the wall horizontally using me.

Even though I tried to resist Celes's strength, nothing could be done with my strength.

「Even though I'm suing the First's Art」

And then Celes threw me to the wall of a different warehouse.

I who hit the wall got rebounded and fell on the ground.

The ground that was mixed with snow and ice was cold and sharp.

When I tried to crawl and stand up, Celes stepped on my head.

She was grinding her foot on my head, but I couldn't push her away.

「How wretched! It's fitting for you.」

The Jewel was tumbling nearby. The great sword had already vanished. I couldn't even stand up or brush her away, but suddenly I was let go—.

「Here, fly away!」

Celes pointed her left hand toward me. She was going to emit flame from there.

I picked up the Jewel and grasped it tightly.

When I half gave up thinking that this was it, magic attacked Celes.

Celes stopped from firing magic at me and deflected the magic attacking her, erasing it.

When I looked toward the direction the magic was coming from, Eva-san was there with her right arm pointed this way.

「Why!?」

Eva-san was smiling.

「I've properly let Shannon escape.」

That wasn't really an answer. Even though I wanted her to escape.

Celes pointed her left hand at Eva-san.

「I'll kill you by burning you slowly. I wonder what kind of voice an elf will cry with when they burn.」

Although she was expressionless, there was anger oozing into her voice. Celes was going to fire her magic. Even though I had to stand up right away, because I used the great sword my body wouldn't move like I wanted.

「At this kind of time!」

Then the situation changed.

Pokon—Such sound resounded to the surrounding. The knights who were observing from a distance yelled.

「Celes-sama!」

Celes glared at the agitated knights.

「Don’t move! Don’t get in my way!」

「Ye, yes!」

A palm sized ice was tumbling in front of me.

It hit Celes’s head, denting her fur head before falling in front of my eyes.

Celes couldn’t dodge it.

The silent Celes started to tremble in rage.

She opened her bloodshot eyes and searched the surrounding. There Shannon was standing.

She was further behind Eva-san. Her breathing was slightly disordered.

Apparently she was using the power of her mystic eyes. Shannon’s eyes were shining gold.

「Shannon, why didn’t you run!?」

Shannon who was smaller than me and powerless answered brazenly.

「I! I swore that I'll absolutely take revenge toward this woman! I don't want to run away! Because if I run away leaving you two behind, I'll regret it for my whole life!」

The ice she threw wasn't really that big.

The damage to Celes was zero.

Even so, Shannon showed how she landed an attack on Celes.

Seeing that, I exerted my strength and stood up.

It was in order to hold down Celes whose attention was taken by Shannon. But, just before I could touch her body, Celes vanished from that spot. I lost my target and tumbled on the ground.

Celes instantly moved until right beside Shannon.

「Shannon run!」

I didn't think that something would happen from me yelling, but I couldn't help myself from yelling.

Frustrating. ……I didn't think that being helpless was this frustrating.

I couldn't protect anyone.

「I won't let you!」

When Eva-san tried to fire magic, Celes turned her left hand at her.

「Kyah!」

Eva-san was blown away from there and crashed on a wall. She fell and fainted.

「Eva-san!」

I couldn't move.

The Sixth was yelling.

『Shannon!』

The Fifth turned toward Celes,

『This monster. No one could predict that she would be this monstrous.』

The strength of Celes that greatly exceeded their expectation made even the ancestors unable to do anything except feeling bewildered.

Celes grabbed Shannon's neck with her left hand and raised her up.

「Those eyes, they seem special.」

「Le, let go!」

Celes was smiling ominously while watching the pained Shannon.

「That's too good for a rubbish like you. That's why, I'll torture you after gouging out your eyeballs. I'll take my time slowly to kill you.」

What should I do? What should I do to be able to save Shannon!?

I thought, and immediately arrived to an answer.

A smile naturally formed.

「—What, you're angry?」

The Third was losing his calm at my action.

『Lyle, provoking her here is—. I see, so you've resolved yourself.』

In order to answer the Third who understood, I strongly grasped the Jewel.

I looked at Eva-san, after that my gaze turned toward Celes and I mocked her.

「Letting your head be defenseless after acting so composed like that, that's really a total joke! How do you feel after getting hit by Shannon who you treated as rubbish huh!?」

I laughed at Celes and made fun of her.

Celes turned toward me. She tossed Shannon away and faced this way.

Even though she possessed overwhelming power, her inside was a selfish child. She changed her target frequently and prioritized her own feeling. Because of that I thought that she absolutely would turn her attention at me if I did this.

Celes took a stance and thrust her rapier. I immediately guarded with my left hand—and got blown away toward a warehouse's wall.

Celes's rapier pierced my left hand, pinning it on the wall.

「Guhha!」

The blade was moved grindingly. Intense pain ran through my left arm. Celes kicked me over and over as though to step on me.

「This trash, this garbage, this useless thing! Don't make fun of me! A waste of breath, a trash like you, don't you dare to laugh at me!」

Celes was enraged. Unlike before she was losing herself from her anger toward me.

……That was right. It was fine like that.

My right hand that blocked Celes's kick was broken. Celes's breathing became disordered and she stopped moving. She grinded her rapier and continued to watch my suffering figure.

「Being made fun by you is something that must never happened. It was for the sake of that I—」

「—tsu!」

I kept praying that Eva-san and Shannon would get away during this time. In order to keep Celes's focus on me, I smiled even while in pain.

When I lifted my face, Celes's left hand was holding up a large blazing fire ball. The flame that was burning dark red was melting the surrounding snow and ice.

I couldn't even move anymore.

「Die, you trash! If only Novem isn't there, then someone like you—」

……Why did she mention Novem's name there?

The next moment, Celes turned her gaze to the yellow gem embedded in her rapier just once. And then, she pulled out the rapier from me and quickly got away from that spot.

「DON'T TOUCH CHICKEN DICKWAAAAAD!」

A large hammer was swung down at the spot where Celes was standing at just now.

The enraged Monica appeared in front of me.

「……Monica.」

「Please don't talk. Everyone will immediately arrive here. Just leave this place to Monica.」

Monica raised her large hammer and didn't take off her gaze from Celes.

「Automaton? Hee, this is the automatic puppet that the ancient people made. It'll be interesting to dismantle it.」

Monica charged toward Celes who was muttering to herself.

Although the hammer struck at Celes, she blocked it with her left arm.

I didn't know where was she hiding such power inside that thin arm, but I got the feeling this was the first time I saw Monica was losing in strength.

『So even Monica is no good. Lyle, can you move?』

I answered 「Doesn't seem like it」 to the Fourth's voice. I also ran out of mana, and my body was tattered that I couldn't move.

『It's really suspicious whether she is human. This is the child of evil god—the First was right. We were also underestimating Celes.』

The Third's voice was oozing with vexation.

Monica struck at Celes with her hammer while,

「Hostility is welling up when I look at you. Are you really human?」

「What a rude puppet. Well, I'll recognize that I'm an existence that surpass human!」

Celes kicked Monica flying until she crashed through a warehouse's wall.

「Monica!」

Blood got out from my mouth when I yelled. The situation was extremely bad.

Monica charged through a warehouse's wall from a different location. She circled behind Celes and struck horizontally with her hammer.

「You're tough. I got a little bit interest.」

「I'm not happy hearing that. You're the only one who I absolutely won't forgive after trying to kill chicken dickwad!」

Eva-san who recovered her consciousness and Shannon ran toward me and gave me first aid.

「No good. Too much blood is flowing out.」

Eva-san was flustered. Shannon was crying.

「You, why did you save me!?」

「Shut up. I told you I'll protect you.」

Even though it would be better if she just escaped……. But, to be truthful I was happy that the two of them were at my side.

When Celes fired magic, Monica was blown away. Monica who fell on the ground lost her right arm and her clothes was scorched.

A second later her hammer fell on the ground. It was intensely burned. The color turned black and it was smoking.

When I looked at Celes, snow and ice were gone only around Celes. The temperature drastically increased that it felt hot.

Monica stood up and held the hammer with her left hand.

「Monica, why aren't you regenerating!?」

Shannon looked at the battered Monica while crying.

Monica had self-repair function.

「I need chicken dickwad's mana for my repair. If I perform repair here, chicken dickwad will die. That's the only thing I absolutely refuse to accept. I decline!」

Even though she was always screwing around normally, why was at this kind of time…….

I forcefully used the First's Art. Limit Burst—it was an Art that ignored the body's burden in addition of strengthening the flesh. It also had the effect of healing wound when in use.

「Lyle, don't force yourself!」

Eva-san was worrying for me, but I would only die if I didn't do anything.

「I have to stop that girl somehow.」

When Celes was about to attack Monica.

This time a battle axe attacked Celes. Celes deflected it with her rapier. Next Aria-san's pear appeared. She stopped it by pinching it.

「Oh, how fast.」

「No way!」

Aria-san accelerated herself using her Art and thrust with a speed that the eye couldn't follow. Such an attack was easily blocked by Celes.

Celes then lifted up her rapier above her head. There Sophia-san was swinging down her battle axe.

The thin rapier that was specialized for thrust was blocking the battle axe.

「Impossible!」

Sophia-san was also in disbelief.

Celes pinched Aria-san's spear and then she threw her at Sophia-san. The two crashed and fell.

「Weak. There is really nothing but small fry. To come in order to save this garbage, could it be they are your comrades? They're comrades fitting for small fry like you.」

The two of them stood up and took their stance.

Celes wasn't interested.

「All of you, be their opponent. I'm going to burn the trash now.」

The knights and soldiers surrounded the two while being armed.

Aria-san readied her spear.

「Sophia, stop everyone's movement.」

Sophia-san shook her head.

「I'm doing it since just now. I'm doing it but」

There wasn't any effect. The movement of the soldiers was dull but, they were moving even then. The knight wasn't affected. The Seventh was vexed.

『The knights who originally should protect Lyle are becoming enemy.』

Then, a huge black tiger came running wile scattering the knights and soldiers. Miranda-san and Clara-san who were riding on its back collected the two.

『Miranda!』

The Sixth raised his voice. His voice was praising her for coming—.

The Fifth was gradually calming down.

『With this the possibility of survival increased slightly.』

He didn't mention winning because there was how much the difference of strength was.

Miranda-san came this way and leaped down from the tiger's back. She took her weapon in front of Celes.

「Clara, run away with Lyle and others.」

Shannon looked at Miranda-san,

「Onee-sama!」

「Go! —I don't know if I'll be able to even buy time.」

Celes was looking fed up.

「…Do you understand the meaning of allying yourself to that side?」

「I understand it well.」

「Unfortunate. Even though you were my favorite.」

Miranda-san glanced at the crying Shannon before,

「I hate you though.」

「I see. Then disappear.」

The large black tiger Miranda-san created was a golem. When she set it after Celes, it was instantly cut apart and returned into soil.

Miranda-san threw knives one after another during that opening. The throwing knives with the shape like arrowhead had blade made from clay.

It was scattered around Celes and exploded in succession. There Miranda-san prepared a golem for our sake.

The spider with adorable deformed appearance had large back.

「Put Lyle on it and run—」

That golem was crushed under the foot of Celes who swooped down from the sky.

「That's unfortunate. I won't let you esca~pe!」

Aria-san and Sophia-san attacked Celes, but they were kicked away.

Monica tried to capture Celes, but she was cut apart with the rapier. Her left arm and left foot were severed and she fell on the ground with a slide.

Clara-san pointed her artificial arm toward Celes, and from there flame was spouted out.

「……This is, Lyle-san's little sister?」

It couldn't be helped that Clara-san was surprised.

Celes was walking within the flame without even getting any burn. And then she grabbed Clara-san's left arm before crushing it within her grip.

「Hee, this is an artificial arm.」

「Tsu!」

Clara-san couldn't move from fear. The one who moved to save her was Eva-san. She got between Celes and Clara-san before stabbing with the short sword she received from me.

「Youu!」

But, Celes easily handled her and Eva-san fell on the ground.

「Eva-san!」

Clara-san tried to help Eva-san, but Celes's hand reached toward her. Miranda-san's string entangled around that hand.

「You all, quickly—」

—Before she could say run, Celes forcefully pulled Miranda-san's string. She swung around Miranda-san and smashed her on a wall. Then she cut the strong with her rapier.

「Onee-sama!」

Miranda-san fell after hitting the wall. Shannon rushed toward her and desperately called out to her.

「Don't touch me. Haa, even so I got dirty. Even though this coat is my favorite……that's right! There is a knight who is married. I'll present this to him. He'll hug this coat every night when he sleep while ignoring his wife. That'll be funny.」

It was an extremely bad hobby. I found it hard to understand how this kind of little sister came to be.

Celes was hateful.

She stole everything from me, and obtained everything that I couldn't obtain—and then, she destroyed even the things I finally obtained.

I was shedding tears seeing my comrades getting felled one after another before me.

Celes showed a sunny smile seeing me like that. That very happy face looked unbelievably ugly to me.

「That face, it's nice! I wanted to see that face! It's just the best. I'll kill you last. Until then, I'll slowly torture them to death in front of your eyes. Aa, I'm really looking forward to it I can't stand it.」

Seeing Celes's ecstatic expression, I—.

「YOUUUUUU!! SOMEONE LIKE YOU!」

The moment I stood up and moved to step forward—.

Celes leaped backward from that spot as though fearing something. Her composure from before was gone. She was glancing repeatedly to the yellow Gem embedded in her rapier.

Until now, she never showed such behavior to us—ahead of her gaze was,

「—Novem[

Novem was slowly walking this way with a staff in her left hand.

Her face wasn't her usual kind expression, it was expressionless—and then when she glanced at us, she frowned just for a bit.

Novem passed us and stood in front of Celes. She opened her mouth.

「……This is different from the promise, Celes-sama.」

Celes turned her gaze to the yellow Gem, and then she began conversing with Novem.

「Is that so? I forgot.」

「I had said it. I won't forgive you if you lay your hand on Lyle-sama.」

「……Hee, then what're you going to do? I am Celes Walt. The successor of Walt House that all of you treasured. You're going to lay your hand on me?」

「I'll do just that if it's necessary. What's important for me is Lyle-sama. Your order of priority is below that.」

Novem's words were terribly cold. I could feel the anger inside her voice.

I also understood she was trying to protect me.

But—however!

「Novem, what is the meaning of this!?」

Novem didn't turn around hearing my voice.

It looked like Celes was hesitating to fight Novem. Celes who was showing an overwhelming difference when fighting us was falling into thought.

「……The current me is strong you know? Do you think I'll lose against the like of you?」

「I won't be able to win. But, do you want to test it? Perhaps I won't be able to win, but Celes-sama also won't get away unscathed.」

Celes's face changed into a loathing expression, but she didn't let herself get driven by anger and attacked. She was frequently looking at the yellow Gem.

I was curious just who in the world was inside there. Then Celes bit her lower lip once before sheathing her rapier.

「……I'll withdraw for now. There is no problem with this right?」

「Yes, I won't pursue. Also, I have one question though.」

「What?」

Celes turned her back toward us to return, but she looked back to see Novem's face.

「Are you Celes-sama, or are you 『Septem』?」

Celes instantly let out her anger.

「Don't call me with that name!」

I wondered if the battle would start again, but Celes frequently paid attention to the yellow Gem—Jewel, and then she headed to her carriage.

After seeing Celes leaving along with the soldiers and knights of Walt House, Novem came to here.

Relieve and various emotions assaulted me.

「Lyle-sama, I'll heal you right away.」

Novem came beside me.

When I was opening my mouth, my consciousness was receding.

I then fell on the ground. There a horse carriage came to our side.

It wasn't Walt House, that crest—belonged to Faunbeux royal family.

—Inside the carriage of Walt House.

Celes was really irritated.

But. Her current figure only looked like she was staring at the yellow Gem embedded in the rapier while talking to herself.

「Annoying. Yes yes, I understand. Sheesh, just why do I have to follow her words.」

That Celes noticed that the carriage was getting slower.

The coachman said something, then the knights and soldiers around were responding.

A knight came reporting.

「Celes-sama, that's—」

「What?」

「A man called Lionel Walt ask to be allowed to meet with Celes-sama.」

The knight who was normally getting his act together was perplexed. Celes pondered just for a bit. She was curious about the man's name.

「Walt?」

When she turned her gaze toward the yellow Jewel, she said 「Hee」 with interest.

Celes smiled and,

「That sounds interesting. Bring him to me.」

「Yes-!」

When the knight brought that man, Celes was surprised for an instant, but she then pressed her stomach and started laughing—.

Chapter 86 – Truth

—The mansion in Centralle that was owned by Faunbeux royal family.

Damian visited there.

He was lying down on a sofa in front of Lianne.

「It's a honor to be able to meet with the famous Professor Damian. You're really a person who is just like in the rumor.」

Lily who was standing behind Damian bowed her head.

「Because Goshujin-sama has no interest to anything other than research.」

When she thought that it was an apology, it was just an excuse.

「……Automaton is really mysterious. Is rude attitude their fundamental basis?」

Damian answered in disinterest.

「Who knows? But, the automaton at Lyle's place……who is it again?」

「It's Poyopoyo.」

Damian who asked the name from Lily said 「That's right」 while continuing his talk.

「Well, that Poyopoyo is even more terrible. Perhaps the ancient people made them to be like that? I'm not interested but, surely the ancient people were magnanimous people. More importantly, Lyle and others are here aren't they?」

Lianne was slightly exasperated in front of the carefree Damian.

「Certainly I'm sheltering them in this mansion. Right now I believe he isn't in a state that can talk with other people.」

Damian took off his glasses.

「Oh, is he heavily injured?」

Lianne shook her head.

「It's not a problem of injury. Perhaps it's already hopeless for them. A trusting relationship that has crumbled once won't be able to return back to before after all.」

Saying that, Lianne started talking about the matter of Lyle and others—.

In a room inside the mansion.

Everyone gathered inside this room where I was sleeping in.

I who was sitting on a chair was wrapped in bandages.

Novem was worrying about me who was in this state. Miranda-san talked to her.

「I can't trust Novem.」

The Jewel hanging on my neck was silent.

Nobody was trying to come to Novem's defense.

Miranda-san was also bandaged on her arms and legs. Shannon was silently hugging such Miranda-san while hanging her head down.

「I wonder what kind of relationship you have with that Celes?」

Celes withdrew from that place because she didn’t want to fight Novem. In addition, it was clear that there was a promise between Novem and Celes.

Novem looked at me.

「……Lyle-sama has only just waken up. If you want to talk please do it in another opportunity.」

Miranda-san didn’t stop pressing her question.

「You want to escape like that? You, just what are you hiding?」

Eva-san defended Novem.

「Wait a second. We were saved thanks to Novem!」

Miranda-san said 「That’s right」 in recognition but,

「Celes who is completely beyond us withdrew when Novem came. I wonder, just why is it you’re hiding your true strength?」

Sophia-san shook her head.

「Miranda-san, please calm down. What do you want to do by attacking Novem-san?」

Miranda-san ignored that opinion of Sophia-san and turned her gaze to me.

「Let’s ask Lyle to decide. It’s impossible for me to accept Novem as a comrade. It’s not just about her hiding something. I can’t trust Novem.」

Aria-san defended Novem.

「Wait. It’s for Lyle’s sake that Novem—」

「Even that is also suspicious. That time, Novem left the inn right behind Monica. And yet, she arrived after us. Did we overtake her?」

Novem was listening to the talk quietly.

Clara-san added to Mirnada-san's talk.

She placed her broken artificial hand in front of her and looked at it.

「I cannot fathom Novem-san getting lost. Even if for argument's sake she took a different route from us, her arrival was too late.」

When Aria-san tried to say something back, Monica also gave a statement that was leaning to Miranda-san's side of argument.

「Judging from her conversation with Celes, it's a fact that she is hiding something from us. Septme, I wonder what kind of meaning that name has?」

It was the name that Novem mentioned to Celes at that time.

Are you Celes, or are you Septem? She asked that.

It was a fact that Novem knew something.

Aria-san and also Sophia-san looked at Novem.

……Novem didn't answer.

Eva-san was stamping her feet.

「You all! If Novem wasn't there, it would end up horribly for everyone! Are you all trying to return good with evil!?」

Miranda-san retorted back with a really cold gaze.

「Thank you for that time. Is it alright with that? In the first place, I don't think that I'll be able to get on with someone who I can't trust

from here on. I don't know when she will slit our throat while we're asleep.」

The Seventh's voice came from the Jewel.

『That's a sound argument. Novem right now cannot be trusted.』

The other ancestors didn't say anything.

It was like they agreed with the Seventh's opinion.

Miranda-san asked me to decide.

「Lyle, you decide. If you won't push away Novem here, then I and Shannon cannot come with you.」

「Eh!?」

It was Shannon who was surprised.

I pressed my right hand on my face while,

「……Novem, there is no problem with my body. Tell us the truth.」

Novem closed her eyes for a bit, then she slowly opened her eyes.

「Yes, Lyle-sama.」

Novem started talking.

「Let me say this first. I'm living not for the sake of Celes-sama or even for Walt House. I'm living for the sake of Lyle-sama. I'm Lyle-sama's ally.」

Miranda-san muttered 「It's good if that's the case」.

「Six years ago. And then to talk about the story until it reaches this point, there is information that I wish for everyone to know first. We

have to go back until the time when Sentras Kingdom was destroyed and Bahbseim founded a new kingdom.」

Miranda-san was making a smile at Novem's story, but it didn't look friendly. Rather, it was a smile that was hiding hostility.

「Oh, that's really an old story. ……Continue with the story.」

Miranda-san took a condescending attitude. She crossed her arms below her chest.

What Novem talked about was about the kingdom that ruled over the continent in the past—Sentras Kingdom.

「Sentras Kingdom was ruling the whole continent, but due to the birth of a single woman, it walked through the path of destruction. Her name was Agrissa……a woman who executed all the other royalty than her, introduced herself as queen, and committed every kind of atrocity possible. Will you understand if I say that she was a country destroying beauty who ruined the continent?」

Aria-san made a huffy expression.

「Even I know that much. But, what about it? I can't see the connection at all though.」

Even if the name of Agrissa came out, no one could imagine how it was connected with me.

「……Agrissa was certainly taken down. But, Bahnseim confined the children of Agrissa to an abandoned land in remote region because they desired the bloodline of Sentras royal family.」

The surrounding was surprised.

Because whether it was in the tale or the history record—all of them told that Agrissa's children and grandchildren were all killed.

When I heard this story, I ignored it as not important. But right now—.

「The blood of noble is the blood of magician. And when it come to the bloodline of Sentras royal family, at that time it was the most excellent bloodline as magician. Bahnseim wanted to take in that bloodline as their own.」

The Third seemed to get curious with that story.

『I don't understand why they hid that. If they're going to introduce themselves as the new ruler of the continent using the bloodline's legitimacy, then hiding it won't serve any purpose. Even if they imprisoned the children to one day mix it into their own bloodline, it's the bloodline of Agrissa right? I think the demerit is big. Is the power so great that they would want to take it in secretly?』

The demerit was they would take in the blood of the evil woman called Agrissa……Agrissa who was the symbol of fear for all people. Taking in that bloodline would make them being considered as the descendant of evil woman.

The Fifth was considering it from a different perspective.

『The First said, that she was a genuine monster wasn't she? I don't understand why they would want the bloodline of such person. It was someone who they defeated themselves wasn't it? Why would they want her bloodline? It's like there is something……something that is scarier than even Agrissa.』

Taking in Agrissa's bloodline.

Right now it was unknown what kind of meaning it had.

Clara-san's glasses was getting slightly tilting, but the person herself seemed to not have any composure to pay it any mind. She asked Novem.

「Ple, please wait. In the history book it said that there is no descendant of Sentras royal family……be, besides, I don't understand the reason of letting them live. If they're going to take in the royal bloodline to display their legitimacy as the ruler of the continent, there is no meaning in hiding them.」

It was Miranda-san who answered that question.

「Something like history can be freely rewritten by the victor. I won't be strange even if they hid any inconvenient truth. Besides, Novem properly said it. Bahnseim royal family wanted that bloodline—that power weren't they? Though for me, even that is questionable.」

Novem nodded and continued her story.

「The family was placed under Bahnseim's surveillance and ended up living as noble in name only at an abandoned land in remote region. Originally they planned for the two houses to reconcile after several generations and become tied in marriage. But, perhaps because of the flow of time, it wasn't carried out.」

It seemed they planned to take in the bloodline when the lingering enthusiasm cooled down, but…….

After the destruction of Sentras royal family, countries in every places of the continent were revolting.

It seemed that intense fighting continued. Many countries were born and destroyed.

Unnoticed Bahnseim Kingdom completely forgot to take in the bloodline of Sentras royal family for themselves.

「They intend to watch for the right time to take in the bloodline but, they ended up giving cold treatment to Sentras royal family for a long time. Sentras royal family that became a duke house then grew to think that Bahnseim is confining them no matter how many generations has passed in order to torment them.」

The Fourth was utterly amazed.

『It became a really troublesome matter huh. That's not a situation where they can make peace.』

The Sixth agreed.

『That was just needlessly piling up resentment and bitterness. Honestly, like that they would think that any reconciliation is impossible and give up.』

Novem continued talking.

「Time passed, and then when it was the era where there was fierce battle against Faunbeux Kingdom. The duke house caused insurrection. They challenged Bahnseim that was weakened due to the push of Faunbeux Kingdom.」

Eva-san was also bewildered.

「I've never heard this story.」

「That's because the insurrection was resolved at the early stage.

The reason was the house head of Walt House at that time, the seventh head Brod-sama. The grandfather of Lyle-sama.」

When the talk about the Seventh came out……Shannon seemed to get sleepy. Her head was swaying.

While Miranda-san was lying her down on the sofa inside the room, the talk was continuing.

「The duke house was defeated by Bahnseim. The reason was because Brod-sama ended the battle against Faunbeux Kingdom at the early stage. He won the battle magnificently.」

Bahnseim Kingdom that managed to take a breather noticed the insurrection and suppressed it quickly.

The duke house didn't have any considerable fighting strength from the beginning. It was decided that they would be purged.

It was decided so but…….

「After the suppression of the insurrection, there was only one daughter who was the survivor of the duke house. Walt House who knew the situation at that time was in a position as advisor to the royal family. Brod-sama was told about Bahnseim's plan for the future, and he took in the surviving daughter.」

The gazes of everyone other than Aria-san and Sophia-san gathered on me.

The two of them were bewildered.

「Eh? Wa, was there something?」

「Is something the matter with Lyle-dono?」

Monica gave additional explanation to the two of them who were like that. She was making a smile that was slightly making fun of them.

「Oh? You two are unable to guess from the story so far? Let me teach it to these two pitiful girls. In short! Chicken dickwad is descended from the bloodline of Sentras royal family!」

Aria-san tilted her head.

「Eh, why?」

Monica who was making a pose was slightly troubled.

「……This is, it's the correct choice to talk from the beginning. That was a good decision for a vixen like you.」

Novem explained carefully.

「At first, they judged that it would be a waste if the bloodline of Sentras royal family was eradicated there. But the daughter also couldn't possibly be sheltered by the royal family, so the daughter—Zenoa-sama was entrusted to Brod-sama who was trusted by Bahnseim.」

Miranda-san nodded.

「So she was Lyle's grandmother.」

Sophia-san was shocked.

「Tha, that means!」

Aria-san too finally noticed. She looked at my face in shock.

The Seventh recalled that time with a slight regret.

『……To think, it'll become like this.』

Novem told 「It's important from here」 and returned to the explanation.

「Brod-sama and Zenoa-sama married. Bahnseim was also feeling misgiving of Walt House taking in Sentras royal family's bloodline. But, Zenoa-sama's fierce anger was directed to the royal family, so Walt House came between them and it was decided that after several generations Bahnseim would take in the bloodline.」

The Fifth muttered with ridiculing tone.

『This is a story that I had heard before. ……As the result of repeating the same thing, Celes was born. I can't laugh from this.』

「Originally, I wasn't someone with fitting status to be engaged with Lyle-sama. It was planned for Lyle-sama or Lyle-sama's son to directly take a daughter from the royal family as bride, and then Walt House would become a duke house.」

And then the royal family would take a daughter from Walt House that had become a duke house as bride, to take in the bloodline of Sentras royal family like that……it was a tedious matter that was going on through many generations.

「……Zenoa-sama who wedded into Walt House had something that she brought with her. It was a yellow Gem—no, it was a magic tool that could also be called as Jewel.」

Aria-san took the red Gem hanging on her neck.

「Eh, this? Co, could it be, the reason Celes was that powerful was!」

Novem shook her head.

「It's different from Gem. Till the end a Gem is a tool to record Arts. In the first place, a Gem is a degraded product that imitated Jewel.」

The Gem's original.

This was the meaning of what Celes said.

「Inside the yellow Jewel that had been in the safekeeping of the family's woman for generations, the personality of a person was recorded. This is the difference between Jewel and Gem. Other than Art a Jewel will also record personality.」

Miranda-san narrowed her eyes and muttered.

「Agrissa you mean.」

Novem confirmed it and continued.

「The yellow Jewel that Celes-sama have—that is the yellow Jewel that Zenoa-sama brought to Walt House.」

The Seventh agreed powerlessly.

『That's right. It was something that Zenoa was safekeeping. She said that if nothing happened, she would make Claire or Celes to inherit it but……』

It seemed that even the Seventh didn't have any memory regarding that matter. But, if it was in Celes's possession, then did Obaa-sama handed the yellow Jewel to Celes?

「Zenoa-sama sealed the yellow Jewel. She died without making anyone inherit it.」

Miranda-san was unable to believe Novem.

「How do you know about that?」

「It was after Celes-sama obtained the yellow Jewel. I don't know the particulars but, since that day Celes-sama changed.」

Sophia-san looked at Aria-san's red Gem.

「Did she change due to obtaining a great power?」

Novem shook her head.

「……The yellow Jewel that Zenoa-sama had isn't just a tool to use Arts. It reproduces Agrissa's power as it is. To put it another way, it's a tool that revive Agrissa.」

The Third sighed.

『This is another very troublesome matter.』

The Fourth was surprised.

『Don't tell me the Jewel's function is—』

Preserving one's personality and transferred it to another body?

Aria-san was losing her calm from the continuous shock and,

「Wa, wait. Such thing, there's no way it's possi—」

Monica answered instantly.

「That's not impossble.」

The place's atmosphere became strange.

Clara-san muttered.

「This is like an occult story.」

「If I have to say, just magic existing is already occult and fantasy enough though. Now then, let's hear the continuation of your story.」

Novem finally touched the story about me there.

「……Lyle-sama, don't have any memory from before ten years old. Or perhaps, his memory of that time is extremely hazy.」

Everyone's gaze gathered on me.

「……Wait. It's certainly hazy but, my childhood memory is properly there.」

Novem shook her head.

「The current Lyle-sama and the previous Lyle-sama are two different people. What Celes-sama did at that day she obtained the Jewel was to take everything from Lyle-sama and then destroyed him.」

I felt a sense of discomfort at the word destroyed.

Sophia-san looked at me,

「Then, could it be that Lyle-sama sometimes is ignorant of the world is because—」

Novem nodded.

「Lyle-sama who got his everything taken at the beginning was more childish in mentality and unstable. He couldn't even get out from the mansion, and he wasn't given a chance to know about the world. He lost most of his memory, and due to his living after that it couldn't be helped that he became ignorant of the world.」

The reason I was childish in mentality and ignorant of the world was because of Celes. I had thought that she did something to me but, as expected it was unthinkable that she could do such thing. I never even imagined it.

Miranda-san asked for confirmation.

「What do you mean by destroyed? You don't mean killing do you?」

「Lyle-sama was a person who was given the expectation of everyone around him. He was also called with things like genius or prodigy. Celes-sama stole everything from such Lyle-sama to make him into an invalid.」

「Such thing is possible?」

「That too is one of the Art's ability.」

「……Wait. Celes charming everyone around her isn't because of Art? Is there still other Arts inside that Jewel?」

The recorded personality was one.

But, there were multiple Arts inside it.

Certainly it was different from the blue Jewel that I had.

「There are definitely multiple Arts inside it. It's not just Art, there is also the possibility that it's reproducing Agrissa's power.」

Novem muttered when the talk was deviating, then she continued.

「Celes-sama stole Lyle-sama's memory, mana, and various other things. Because everything couldn't be taken all at once, she was slowly stealing them. The atmosphere of Walt House also changed from that time. When I noticed, it was already too late.」

……Celes stole everything from me?

My memory, and then my strength too……even my place to belong was taken by Celes?

「Wa, wait a second, Novem. Why did Celes do something like that to me? Was the me before losing my memory that hated?」

I wondered if Celes was taking revenge to me, but apparently that wasn't the case.

「No. Lyle-sama was kind to everyone, and you were also affection to Celes-sama. But……I can only say that Celes-sama's disposition is like that from her birth. Right now I'm wondering that perhaps when she was alive, Zenoa-sama felt apprehension to that and didn't entrust the Jewel to Celes-sama.」

The gazes that were directed to me were sympathetic.

If there was a reason then I could still be understood. But, I who got my everything taken away simply because of that fellow's whim, just what should I do then?

Monica asked.

「Has the evil woman called Agrissa taken over her body already?」

「That's not the case. That day, I met with someone from Forxus House. Based from what I was told, Celes-sama is still retaining her self.」

「……If she is like that when she's still retaining her self, then she's dangerous regardless of the matter about Agrissa.」

Novem looked at me.

「After I noticed the change in Walt House, I negotiated with Celes-sama. I made her promised not to lay her hand on Lyle-sama. Celes-sama too was weaker at that time compared to now……there was still room for negotiation even for me. I also made her to accept looking after Lyle-sama in the mansion until you come of age.」

Miranda-san placed her hand on her waist.

「And so after that Lyle lived in house arrest. And when he came of age he immediately got driven out. Let's see, even if some parts of that are the truth, as I thought I'm still not convinced.」

Eva-san glared at Miranda-san.

「You, do you know just how worried Novem is about Lyle—」

「That's why. That's why it makes me even more unable to trust her. Novem, are you staying at Lyle's side because of duty? Answer me that.」

Novem shook her head.

「It's not because of duty. This is what I want to do. It's not related to Walt House or Forxus House.」

「Then I'll change my question. You, what are you trying to make Lyle—to make us do?」

Novem looked down and stayed quiet for a while, and then she lifted her face.

「……Lyle-sama is the only one able to stop Celes-sama. Lyle-sama is able to oppose Celes-sama's charm. Other people are no good. Especially the opposite sex—if Celes-sama get serious, the any male will immediately get ensnared by her.」

The reason why Novem was unnaturally gathering women to my side. That was because of Celes.

「Then, you gathered women around me because—」

「Whether Lyle-sama will fight or run away, strong women who won't get charmed will be necessary. In fact, not one of us was charmed by Celes-sama at that day. With male……that won't be the case. There are the rare cases who won't get charmed but, the number of such people is far fewer than woman.」

Novem said.

「I'm not able to win against Celes-sama. My strength at best will only be able to wound her. Besides, if I'm defeated, Lyle-sama will be targeted next.」

Novem said that was the only thing that couldn't be allowed. I didn't know what should I say to her.

I recalled the words Septem.

「Then, what is this Septem thing?」

「……It was Agrissa's alias. The seventh goddess, Agrissa self-proclaimed to be her reincarnation.」

It seemed the Third didn't know about that.

『Sometimes there would be a person who claimed to be a goddess like that, but the inhuman and atrocious Agrissa called herself as the seventh goddess? Did she intend to be sarcastic by introducing herself as the goddess who was the kindest to human? Even so, Celes really hated it when she was called Septem wasn't it?』

The Fifth sighed.

『—Now then, Lyle. What’re you going to do?』

In front of everyone’s gaze, I was unable to make a decision.

「……I want some time.」

I said that and ended the discussion.

Chapter 87 – Decision

The night Novem talked about the truth.

I came inside the Jewel.

Floating in the room of the round table were the broken silver great sword and bow. Both of them were destroyed and didn't look usable.

The Third talked with a troubled look.

『I thought that Novem-chan was hiding something but, it was a heavy story that surpassed my expectation. If possible I wish that she would talk about it faster.』

The Seventh's shoulders dropped.

『I didn't think that the yellow Gem Zenoa had is the actual Jewel and contain Agrissa's memory.』

The Fourth was sending a sharp gaze at the Seventh.

『It became something outrageous because you took in Agrissa's bloodline.』

『Who can imagine that it will become something like this? In the first place, didn't everyone here underestimate Celes?』

The ancestors didn't deny that.

The Sixth scratched his hair.

『Don't say that. But, it's our win that we're able to survive. We can also see what plan to make. Anything can happen from here on.』

I was shocked by the Sixth's words.

「We will be able to manage somehow?」

『Hm? Yeah, naturally.』

How reliable.

Just when I thought that they had a way to oppose Celes,

『Don't get involved with that monster. The best choice is to take distance. Going to Beim just like planned at the beginning and earn money there to leave this continent is also nice.』

「—Eh?」

The Third was also continuing the talk in the same direction with the Sixth's suggestion.

As though they had given up to win against Celes.

『In order to bring happiness to the girls who accompany Lyle too, earning money and building a mansion somewhere to have a relaxing live is also not bad.』

The Seventh was also giving up.

Even though he was talking that much about how he wanted me to succeed Walt House, he changed his plan after witnessing Celes's strength.

『Lyle might as well entering the service of a country somewhere. Let's build a new Walt House in Lyle's generation.』

The Fifth was also enthusiastic.

『That's nice. It's not a bad choice to become a small feudal lord in a country that is relatively peaceful.』

The Fourth fell into thought slightly.

『It's also hard to discard the option of becoming merchant. But, if you want to enter a country's service then a country that's somewhat in a chaotic situation will be better. You will also get treasured more if you join the disadvantaged side.』

The Sixth was laughing heartily. Even though usually he looked reliable, today was different.

『You will get immediately treasured in that case! But, if you mistake the situation, you will get hated by the enemy and envied by the ally. No matter how many life you have it won't be enough.』

The Third also joined the talk.

『A place with a lot of war is no good isn't it? Well, for now let's go to Beim first before considering it again.』

……Everyone was different from usual.

They were giving up from the start.

「Ple, please wait. Are we going to ignore Celes? We'll just leave her alone like this!?」

『That's right.』

The Third answered right away. He joined his hands behind his head and looked at the floating silver bow. It was smashed apart and its shape became incomprehensible. He was staring at it expressionlessly.

『You can't win against that. Even if you win then what? She is the favorite of the crown prince isn't she? Let's assume that you get lucky and the brainwashing is released. ……After that, what do you think will happen to Walt House?』

The Fourth took off his glasses.

『After harming the relationship with Faunbeux Kingdom like that, it'll be good if the punishment is just a change of rank. It'll be possible that this time the punishment is death sentence for the whole clan.』

The Fifth immediately denied the hypothesis.

『That too is only if we can win against Celes. I won't say that it's impossible to win against that monster. If something is alive then it can be killed. I'm also curious how the ice Shannon threw hit her head. There might be a weak point. But, do you think how many things will be sacrificed to make that happen?』

The Sixth's shoulders dropped.

『We don't know how many of your comrades will die. It's also possible it'll become total annihilation. Even if you win the thing that you obtain will be too few.』

The Seventh crossed his arms.

『Lyle, you have things to protect. Make the girls who come with you become happy. Honestly, if you are going to keep someone in your side it should be Miranda.』

「……What do you mean by that?」

The Third answered with unamused look.

『I think that Novem-chan is also good but, that depend on Lyle. If you choose Novem-chan, then Miranda-chan and Shannon-chan—and Clara-chan too won't come with you.』

The Fourth was laughing.

『The Third really like Clara. On the other hand, if you choose Miranda then Eva won't come with you. The ones who will come

with you no matter what are……Monica and, Aria and Sophia I guess?』

I shook my head.

「Why is that? Is there no strategy to solve this like usual?」

Even though they were usually unreliable, they ancestors were reliable when push came to shove. They averted their gaze from me.

Instead the Fifth asked me.

『What are you going to do even after winning? After you win by sacrificing various things—what will remain for you?』

「You saw Celes right!? If we leave her alone like that, that fellow will kill a lot of people from here on!」

『You're right. And?』

「—Eh?」

『That's why I'm asking you so what. A lot of people will die. What does it matter to you? Because you're Celes's big brother? So what. It doesn't concern you. The current head Maizel who made Celes into the heir is in the wrong. Bahnseim Kingdom who accepts Celes is in the wrong. The surrounding countries who are underestimating her are in the wrong.』

The Sixth opened his mouth while I was perplexed.

『Lyle, it's not your responsibility. Rather you're a victim. Besides, no one is asking you to stop Celes. Perhaps Novem? But even that Novem was thinking about the possibility of you choosing the path of not fighting.』

The Seventh's complexion was bad.

『Let's change the way we say it. Lyle, no one is expecting anything from you. Responsibility is something that is shouldered by the people in the position befitting it. You don't have any responsibility.』

The Fourth nodded.

『Prioritize your own happiness. The girls following Lyle will become unhappy you know?』

I shook my head.

『No way. I don't want something like that! Such thing……such thing, abandoning everything even knowing what's going on is obviously awful!』

At that time Celes killed even her own knight without batting an eyelid.

No matter what she was going to do from here on, a lot of blood would flow.

A great war would occur everywhere in the continent.

In fact, there would be war with Faunbeux Kingdom due to Celes's action. Such thing would continue from here on.

Besides—if Celes was taken over by Agrissa, then the continent might follow the same path like three hundred years ago.

「If Celes isn't stopped, then thousands, tens of thousands of people will die.」

『You're wrong. It will be in the hundreds of thousands, or millions. Celes is still young. Perhaps tens of millions of people will die for the sake of Celes alone.』

In respond to the Fifth’s words I,

「Then, why!?」

『—The possibility of winning is extremely low. Someone who fight even though only unhappiness is waiting even if they win is just an idiot.』

The Fourth put on his glasses while,

『There is no need for Lyle to fight. Rather you have really done well hanging on until now.』

The Seventh was pressing his hands on his face.

『It’s enough already. Lyle, you have fought enough. You have endured the loneliness in the mansion. You have many things stolen from you by Celes, even so you survived. We were mistaken. You’re praiseworthy.』

……I didn’t feel happy.

That wasn’t it. Those weren’t the words that I wanted to hear!

I……I!

「I……want to stop Celes.」

The Sixth looked at me.

『Do you want to take revenge for the gardener who you were indebted to and your friends who she killed?』

I clenched my fist.

「There is also that. There is that but—because of her fault many people meet misfortune! Can you see it as unrelated with yourself? I don’t want to do that!」

I was told I couldn’t win.

I also thought so.

Even so—if I ignored it just like this, would I become able to be happy? Would I be able to live happily by myself while the number of people meeting misfortune because of her fault continued to increase?

The Sixth said to me.

『Give up. There is no use.』

The five of them all said that there was no chance of victory even if I fought Celes. The opinion of the ancestors was correct. Even I couldn’t draw the image of me winning.

My chest felt painful as though it was constricted.

When I looked up, a broken silver great sword a broken silver bow were floating.

……It felt like I heard voices.

《……You can stop her if it’s you.》

《……You will be fine if it’s you.》

The First and the Second’s voices came to mind.

「I will……fight Celes.」

A silent click of the tongue could be heard.

Even the Third was making a cold gaze unlike usual.

『That's really a letdown. Even though I thought you will make a smarter choice. Aa~aa, will Novem-chan and others also die because they follow Lyle? They're really pitiful.』

The one who was angry to me was the Sixth.

『You have no strength and also no wisdom. Besides you also have no resolve. It's impossible for you.』

I put the five of them within my sight and looked at everyone's face.

I hit the round table with both hands and stood up.

「If it's resolve then I have it!」

The Fourth took off his glasses without looking at me and wiped the lenses.

『That's a lie. Lyle, when you fought with the people of Virden House, why didn't you kill them? With Lyle's true strength you should be able to kill them, whether the soldiers or the knights. If you ended it immediately, you wouldn't need to encounter Celes.』

「Tha, that's!」

The Fifth pointed out my flaw.

『You're too naïve. Could it be you're thinking you just need to defeat Celes and everything will be all right? That girl becomes the crown princess. Do you really understand the meaning of fighting against a country?』

Certainly I hadn't thought until further ahead.

I also didn't understand how to fight from here on.

I didn’t understand but—.

「There’s no way I know about that. I don’t know the meaning of doing that at all. But—but!」

I glared at the five of them.

「I decided to do it! If you all are just going to complain from the side, then just shut your trap already!」

The gazes of the five all turned sharp.

The gaze that they had never turned toward me contained intensity that felt like they could kill someone with just their eyes.

The Sixth was scarier than usual. A giant glaring at you had that much of an impact but, the Sixth had something that was more than that.

『Don’t get carried away you brat. If Miranda and Shannon get sacrificed because of you, then I’ll use every way to crush you. Don’t think that we can’t do anything here.』

I laughed.

I put on a grin, and then—.

「Am I going to spend my life in fear like this forever? The ancestors are teaching me the great and smart way to live. I’m so happy I’m crying. You’re saying that it’s okay to run because I cannot win? Can you say that Celes won’t come chasing me when she has grown until she is beyond even Novem huh!?」

If you were going to fight, then do it while there was still a possibility to win.

『That Novem cannot be trusted though. Perhaps she is actually connected with Celes and laughing together with her behind your

back. Miranda also said it right? It's not likely that the whole of Novem's story is the truth.』

The Third snapped his fingers.

『Can you say the same thing even after seeing this?』

The scenery inside the Jewel changed, under dark red sky—Novem and others were lying down on the ground.

Their murdered figure could be seen there.

I told myself that this was an illusion and glared at the Third.

The Third who was usually expressive was expressionless.

『Your complexion is bad there. I can't expect anything from you in the future if you're already flustered just from an illusion of this level. The girls who come with you will die. Even if you luckily win, what will wait after that will only the fate of getting feared as a family of Celes and got rid away by everyone.』

Novem and others who had become corpse gathered on my feet and grabbed my ankle. Their mouth spat out blood with spear and arrows stabbing their body.

「Lyle-sama, why didn't you save me?」

Miranda-san looked at me and cried.

「Shannon died. I'm also in this state. —Why did you fight Celes!?」

Aria-san and Sophia-san also caught my legs and then—.

「If only I didn't come with you.」

「I never thought I would end up like this.」

Monica only had her head remaining looking at me.

「Aa, chicken dickwad. Do you know where my body is? I can't take care of chicken dickwad like this. I have to find my body quickly.」

Clara-san was getting on my back with her body losing its arms and legs.

「Lyle-san, I want new prosthetics. I don't have my arms and legs anymore.」

The beating of my heart quickened.

Even knowing that this was illusion, I wanted to close my eyes from this scene.

Eva-san was holding her slashed throat with both hands. With a hoarse voice due to the leaking out air,

「Give it back. Give me back my voice!」

And then Shannon was,

「Aa~aa, I'm hungry. I want to eat something. But you know, Lyle……my stomach is like this so I can't eat.」

Shannon who had a large hole in her stomach was looking at me while laughing.

The Third spoke.

『—Everyone is so pitiful. Because they got involved with Lyle, everyone met misfortune like this. Everyone become unhappy because of Lyle's decision.』

I took a deep breath and calmed my heart.

When I noticed, the illusion was vanishing.

「Even so I'll fight Celes.」

Knowing that my answer didn’t change, the Third shook his head.

『Your determination isn’t shaken even after seeing this kind of sight. How magnificent. It’s fine if you make all the people who get involved with you meet unhappiness like that.』

I hit the round table with my fist.

The sound resounded inside the room, then I vented my feeling

「Are you telling me to feel satisfied as long as I can be happy myself? Even I—have been involved with many people until now! Rather than living in regret after shutting my eyes and ears while treating all of that as though it never happened, choosing to fight is still better!」

The Fifth closed his eyes.

『Are you going to ignore the people who will become unhappy for the sake of you fighting Celes?』

The Fourth ridiculed me.

『Someone who try to do the right thing, or perhaps someone who think of them as righteous sometimes will become even more horribly cruel because of it. Lyle has the talent for it. As expected from Celes’s big brother.』

「I don’t think that I’m righteous. Even so—even so it’s no good unless someone do it.」

『How about leaving it to the qualified person? Being a hero isn’t fitting for Lyle.』

Even I wanted to leave it to the hero if someone like that existed.

If there was a hero in this world, then I was fine with helping that person.

But, right now in this moment—

「Who do you mean by the qualified person huh? If there's someone like that then bring him here! You're telling me to leave this alone because someone else will do it? I'm saying this because no one is doing anything! If someone else wants to do it then I'll help them out! There isn't anyone. I also can't expect that anyone like that will show up. Wait for a hero who will someday appear? Don't joke around!」

I yelled following my emotion. Then I calmed down my rough breathing.

「……I'll do it. I'll fight Celes. It's not for anyone else's sake. I also have no intention to claim that justice is at my side. But, I'll do it because that's what I want to do! If you guys are only going to whine and grumble then just shut up and watch from over there!」

The room of the round table suddenly shined.

.

「It's not because someone told me. It's also not because someone requested me. I decided by myself that I'll defeat Celes!」

.

The floating broken silver great sword, and then the silver bow were shining and returning to their former figure.

One of the Jewels that were placed in the ceiling in radial shape showed a strong shine.

My Art.

My own Art was liberating its second stage.

『What in the world is this?』

The Seventh looked behind me. A light was emitted from behind. When I turned around a memory room that wasn't there until now was created.

While I was feeling surprised by the birth of the door that didn't exist there before this, the Third closed his eyes.

『……Is the Jewel recognizing Lyle? Good grief, I don't understand why you're trying to walk a painful path.』

The Fourth was looking up to the silver weapons that were repaired.

『Doesn't this make it like the First and the Second recognized him?』

The Fifth was astonished while grumbling again.

『I wish that you will ponder about it more before deciding though. It's the truth that there isn't any need for you to force yourself to fight. I'm still in opposition even now.』

The Sixth made a troubled smile.

『When you finally decided your own objective, it ended up being a really outrageous objective.』

The Seventh used his hand to hide his eyes that became a bit tearful.

『Lyle—I, wished that you will choose a path of survival even if it's just you.』

I was a bit startled by the change of the five's attitude.

「Are you guys testing me?」

The Fourth shook his head.

『It's the fact that we're thinking it's better if you don't fight Celes. After all there isn't any prospect of being able to win against her with certainty. If you only halfhearted feeling then we intended to strongly object and stop you.』

The Fifth was worried.

『It's not enough with just resolve though. Celes is still in the middle of growing right? It's simply a nightmare that she will become even stronger. If there is a prospect of victory……it will only be by dragging the whole continent into this.』

The Sixth spread out his hands,

『Isn't that fine. The Eighth—no, Lyle is the Ninth. Along with the Ninth, Walt House will fight with the fate of the world in the line. That's really something worth doing.』

The Seventh looked at me. His eyes were a bit red.

『Lyle, now that it has come to this you won't be able to do anything by yourself. Bahnseim is a large country. In order for you to win, you'll need the appropriate power.』

「……Appropriate power?」

『It won't be enough with just a simple strength. You right now don't have any authority. You also don't have enough money and soldier. In your present state you won't be able to even fight Celes. 』

The Third stood up, then the remaining four also stood up.

『We'll lend you a hand if you have resolved yourself. This'll be a fight that even us are inexperienced at. The matters in which we're unreliable with will also increase from here on.』

I grinned.

「That's reliable though.」

『Is that so? Also, let me teach you one important thing from now.』

When I thought just what he was going to say,

『Lyle, can you dirty your hand in order to defeat Celes?』

I was asked whether I could kill human.

I clenched my hand and strongly nodded. Then the Third continued.

『From here on Lyle will make other people meet unhappiness. You will be able to advance only by making other people unhappy. You have the resolve to defeat Celes even then aren't you?』

「Yes.」

『I see. Then, become a villain from today.』

The faces of the Third and others were the very picture of seriousness.

「Villain?」

『Step on other people in order to accomplish your great cause. You will want to vomit when you put on a mask of justice. A great cause is necessary. And it's also fine to talk about justice. But you see, it's no good if you don't have the self-awareness that you're a villain. Rather than stepping over other people and advanced forward for

the sake of justice, being a villain is still better. You have the resolve to become a heinous great villain aren't you?』

I didn't expect that but, if I could defeat Celes with that—.

「……I'm, heading to hell huh.」

When I showed a grin, everyone smirked and laughed.

『You can rest assured, all of us here are villain. We're nothing more than memory but, our real self is surely in hell so you don't need to worry about not having any guide there.』

The Fifth also grinned meaningfully.

『Besides, if you're planning to step into hell then you'll be able to step into it while you're alive. After all, your life will be hell from now on. Battlefield is hell you know? We will guide you properly, whether it's in this world or in that world.』

It seemed my hell would begin from this moment.

—These guys are really reliable guide aren't they.

『Also there is just one more thing. Promise us one thing.』

「Promise?」

『Yes. It's an important promise.』

When I opened my eyes, I woke up when the dawn still hadn't arrived.

I could move without problem but—.

「The wound in my left arm is still remaining huh.」

The wound that was created when Celes stuck me on the wall was still painful. And then, the scar was remaining vividly.

I grabbed the wound with my right hand.

「I guess it's just right so that I don't forget that humiliation.」

The frustration of being unable to do anything.

The despair of seeing my comrades falling……this was just right so that I wouldn't forget them.

Inside the room was Monica who was sleeping while standing.

When I got out of the bed and stood up, Monica also opened her eyes.

「Fuee, I overslept.」

Even though there was no drool on her mouth, she made a wiping gesture while looking embarrassed.

「Is that on purpose?」

「Fufu, cute isn't it?」

Monica said that and posed, then she told me what time it was.

「There is still a bit more time until dawn though?」

「I'm just waking up early.」

I said that and then asked Monica.

「Hey, will you come with me no matter what kind of stupid thing I said?」

「Of course!」

Hearing Monica's instant answer, I wondered if perhaps this fellow wasn't thinking of anything. Such worry crossed my mind but, I also felt how reliable she was.

「……Thanks.」

「Oh! So you finally go dere? Finally this Monica's love goes through! Then, let's quickly ascertain it by skin contact—」

I quickly hit Monica's head. Her voluminous twintail shook from it.

The tip of her hair shook in bouncing way. While seeing that, I recalled the time when I gave her a name at the beginning.

I named her Poyopoyo which was unpopular to everyone.

「……Monica.」

「What is it?」

Monica who was pressing her hands on the spot that got hit was looking teary.

「The party is dissolved. I found something to do. Come with me.」

Monica made a serious face and bowed politely with a curtsy.

「I shall accompany you no matter where.」

「Sorry that your master is an idiot.」

Monica smiled. She looked really happy.

「A hopeless master is the most worthwhile master to be devoted to. This Monica love chicken dickwad who is like that.」

……I couldn't honestly feel happy hearing that.

—Sophia was confused from the morning.

「Just when I wondered what he would say.」

She was inside the room she was using together with Aria and Clara. She was bewildered by what Lyle said this morning.

Clara was reading a book.

It looked hard for her to read with one hand.

「I think that it can't be helped. After all, there is a change of plan. Lyle-san will also pay the money, and we'll be able to come along if it's until Beim. I think there isn't really any problem.」

Aria was irritated.

「It's troubling if he said that so suddenly! How about our feeling—」

Lyle told everyone about the change of plan.

There was no change with the plan of going to Beim.

But, his aim wasn't to become a first class adventurer, but to defeat Celes.

One day Celes would spread out disaster to the whole continent.

Someone had to take her down.

Lyle declared that he would take action to accomplish that.

Sophia looked down.

(There'll be only hell waiting. It's also unknown whether he will be able to prepare a satisfactory reward for it. He said that but, he doesn't need to dissolve the party just because of that.)

Sophia asked Aria and Clara about their intention.

「What will the two of you do?」

Clara answered right away.

「I have decided.」

From Clara's attitude, Sophia judged that she would surely leave the party after its dissolution. Aria also reached the same conclusion with Sophia.

「You're cold as usual. Well, I also understand your feeling. Anyone will hesitate if they're told to challenge Celes again.」

In front of the worrying Aria, Sophia was also unable to find an answer—.

—The courtyard of the mansion of Faunbeux royal family.

Eva was moving her body.

Sophia was asking that Eva about the matter from here on.

「What I'm going to do after this? That's obvious.」

「You answered it quickly.」

「It's useless even if I'm worrying about it. Sophia too, it'll be better if you decide it by yourself. If you get influenced by someone else's opinion, then you will regret it later, thinking that it shouldn't be like this.」

「Ye, yes. Then, Eva-san is—」

Eva thrust her finger on Sophia's large breast.

「Hyah! Wha, what're you doing!?」

「That's why, don't worry about other people's opinion! I won't tell you my answer. Find your own answer properly.」

Eva said that and begun exercising once more—.

—The room that Miranda and Shannon were usuing.

When Sophia visited, Miranda was busily doing some kind of preparation.

She kept her back turned toward her while preparing some kind of tool and taking memo.

Shannon was looking alternately at the face of Miranda and Sophia in a dither.

Sophia was feeling timid at Miranda who didn't seem like she would answer her question and hung her head down.

Miranda sighed.

「Can we win against Celes? You want to ask something like that?」

「E, err……」

Miranda turned toward Sophia. Her attitude was harsher than usual.

「It's impossible if we're staying the same like now. It'll be difficult with frontal attack.」

「Even Miranda-san cannot win?」

「It's impossible with myself alone. The possibility is low even with our current lineup.」

Sophia looked at Miranda's figure and thought.

「Miranda-san is always speaking so clearly.」

「Looks like my answer isn't one that you are hoping for. Well, do as you like. No one will complain even if you run away.」

Sophia left the two's room—.

—Shannon was looking at Miranda inside the room that Sophia had left.

「Onee-sama?」

Miranda stood up and folded her arms under her chest.

「It seems you want to say something.」

「……I think, that was a bit cold.」

「Do you want me to persuade Sophia gently? It'll be troubling if she doesn't decide this much on her own. I'm not Sophia's caretaker.」

Shannon dropped her gaze.

「She was really lost.」

Miranda shrugged toward Shannon.

「You read Sophia's emotion using your eyes didn't you? Well, even I understood that much though.」

「Then, why?」

「Why I pushed her away coldly, you asked? You see, I want Sophia and Aria to decide with their own will. It'll be just a bother even if they come along with a weak resolve thinking of coming along

because that's what everyone does. If that's the degree of their resolve, then it will be for their own good to leave the party from the start.」

Shannon was slightly relieved that Miranda was thinking of them in their own way.

「……besides, if Novem's story is true then even if we get new comrades from here on, they will be all woman. It'll be hard for them if they come along with half-baked feeling.」

「What will be the problem of that?」

「Relationship with fellow woman is something troublesome. Right now things are still going barely well, but it won't be strange if this balance crumble one day.」

Shannon almost said that it looked like Miranda was the one making that balance crumbling, but she swallowed those words.

「It's better to stop both Aria and Sophia staying at Lyle's side with half-baked feeling. Lyle looks like he has resolved himself. If it's something that he decides himself, then I won't make any complain.」

Shannon thought for a bit, then when she was going to convey her own feeling,

「I――」

「Ah, Shannon will come together with me.」

「――Eh?」

「Because, you won't be able to live without me. Sophia is an adult, but you're still a child so you'll come with me.」

Shannon who was told she was still a child felt really complicated—.

Chapter 88 – The Mad Capital

The snow was thawing.

In this period when the spring would soon arrive, a great number of people were gathering from everywhere to the royal capital Centralle.

At the square in front of the royal palace, one wouldn't be able to even estimate just how many tens of thousands of people were there.

I hid my face with a hooded robe and looked at the woman standing beside me.

The woman who was hiding her face similarly using hood was Princess Lianne.

「What is your reason deliberately inviting me here?」

I was in the square was also because of Princess LIanne's invitation.

「Don't you think it's also nice to watch the historical moment together with my family's enemy? Well, if I have to speak my true feeling, it's because a sense of camaraderie with you is budding inside me now that you have decided to defeat that woman.」

This person was rejoicing when she heard I decided to defeat Celes.

The figure of a lovely princess couldn't be seen there.

Honestly speaking Princess Lianne who was wearing an ominous smile looking like she was going mad.

「It's not for revenge.」

「If you'll defeat her then I won't question your reason.」

The palace gate was reconstructed and had a balcony created there.

The flags hanging down from there belonged to the royal family—while the other one belonged to Walt House.

The formal engagement announcement between Celes and the crown prince would be carried out after this.

The Fourth's voice came from the Jewel.

『Even though they only have a single child on hand, they're marrying her off to another family. Just what are they thinking?』

Walt House's heir was only Celes.

That Celes was marrying into his highness the crown prince's family only sounded like a joke that couldn't be laughed at.

But, when I looked at the populace around me—.

「CELES-SAMAAAAAA!」

「Aaa, I want to see Celes-sama's figure quickly!」

「I went out from the village for the sake of this day!」

……There was a part of me that was thinking that even Celes's absurd popularity couldn't be helped right now.

Princess Lianne talked to me.

「It seems you will head to Beim after this.」

「Yes, that's my intention. I will gather strength there.」

「I will look forward to it. Will you need support?」

「About that. One day, if I come to need it then I will visit to ask.」

A support was a charming proposal for me right now.

But, I wanted connection with Princess Lianne. Rather than forcing herself to support me, she should prioritize herself for now.

「One day, is it?」

「……Yes, when that time come I will visit without fail.」

「I will wait without putting much hope to it. I will also obtain more power until that time.」

That's right. It would be convenient for me if this person obtained power.

While we were making such talk, Celes and his highness Rufus appeared on the balcony.

The cheers of the surrounding hurt my ears.

Princess Lianne saw his highness Rufus and held back her tears.

The Third's voice came from the Jewel.

『……That prince called Rufus, he look similar with the shitty bastard. Lyle, when you take down Bahnseim, give him a hard punch for me.』

I had no grudge against his highness Rufus, so that suggestion was rejected.

I couldn't take off my eyes from my parents standing behind Celes.

His majesty the king and her highness the queen also appeared. The sound of trumpets resounded and the populace fell silent.

Everyone was waiting impatiently for Celes's words.

Celes left behind his highness the crown prince and walked forward. She spread out her hands.

「Everyone, are you well~!」

The populace was greatly heated up at that very lighthearted greeting.

Even just this was already impossible but, there were too many impossible things happening that he didn't know from where he should start pointing it out.

The populace fell silent when Celes gave a signal with her hand.

I was watching with a cold gaze thinking that they were really well trained.

「I'm in a greatest—bad mood.」

Celes started explaining the reason in front of the murmuring populace.

「When I said that I'll become the crown princess, some complainers showed up. They said that it will cause a war with Faunbeux Kingdom. Even though I love Rufus, they're really horrible.」

The populace was agreeing.

「That's right! Celes-sama isn't wrong!」

「Make the Faunbeux bunches shut up!」

「Don't forgive the nobles who are defying Celes-sama!」

Celes was happy with the populace's reaction and spoke loudly.

「Thank you everyone! Then let's crush the defiant bunches together!」

The people raised their voice loudly in agreement. It felt like the air was shaken by their roar.

「I can rest assured with everyone in the capital here. Then, as the reward I will manage this country for all of you. I will become everyone's queen.」

Nobody could stop Celes.

People who went against her were eliminated. There must be also people who were obeying her even if they weren't charmed by Celes.

The majority was charmed and the whole capital was going mad.

Rufus approached Celes and gave her the kiss that was the oath of their engagement. The populace sent them their blessing seeing that.

Seeing that sight, Princess Lianne were letting out big drops of tear and looked like she would crumble on her knees.

I caught her shoulders and helped her to keep standing wile glaring at the balcony.

Celes announced with a wide smile.

「First we'll crush the opposing nobles within the country. And then next we will march outside the country.」

The populaces were praising Celes.

It seemed among them there were also people still in their right mind. They were making an uncomprehending face at this scene. But, they were gradually getting swallowed by the surrounding's passion, got charmed, and began to praise Celes loudly.

Princess Lianne was shedding tears beside me while muttering.

「Rufus-sama. Rufus-sama! Why are you with that woman!」

Even knowing that it wasn't the fault of his highness the crown prince who went mad, I couldn't blame Princess Lianne.

The Fourth was quite creeped out by this scene.

『……It will be hard to take on something like this.』

Celes raised her voice in front of the tens of thousands of audiences.

「Now, the fun time has just begun!」

It seemed even the hell that would begin after this was an entertainment for Celes.

The Fifth muttered.

『I wonder, compared to Agrissa which one is more horrible?』

The completely mad capital.

The Sixth talked to me.

『Lyle, don't forget this day. It's from here. From here, the true battle between you and Celes is starting.』

The fight with Celes that would drag other people, other country, and the continent into it.

I had no intention of losing.

「Celes, prepare yourself.」

The Seventh looked at his son and daughter-in-law who were looking happy behind Celes and lamented.

『Maizel, Claire……I never thought that I would see you two in this kind of way.』

When we next met—my parents would also become enemy.

I hugged Princess Lianne who continued to cry close to me while looking up to the balcony with a cold gaze within the wildly enthusiastic audiences.

.

—Lionel was watching himself in front of a mirror.

That day.

The day Lyle fought Celes.

Lionel was watching everything.

「Luck has turned my way too.」

He was charmed by Celes who overwhelmed even Lyle. He chased after Celes's carriage, went ahead of it and forcefully asked for a meeting.

Lionel promoted himself desperately and it seemed Celes took a liking to him. She granted him official position and status.

「I look really imposing.」

Inside the room, Lionel was checking out himself many times in front of the mirror.

The brand new extravagant outfit was the uniform that was worn by the knights. But this uniform was the one being used by the Special Elite Guards that was especially recognized by Celes even among those knights.

Special Elite Guards that were created by Celes's whim.

Celes took a liking at Lionel and he obtained great success.

「This is befitting me. That's right, this is the position that is really worthy for me.」

Because he was a member of the elite guard formed by Celes, Lionel was granted the rank of baron.

His post was a captain of the Special Elite Guard.

However, he still didn't have any subordinate.

Even so, he was granted the special right to order several knight orders. He was treated really favorably.

「I've made you wait, Aria. I'm going to pick you up.」

Lionel brought the handkerchief he received from Aria to his nose and inhaled deeply. Then he exited the room and headed to where Aria was—.

A lot of furniture was brought out from the mansion of Princess Lianne.

The mansion would be abandoned after this so it couldn't be helped.

I gathered everyone inside a room that had been mostly cleaned out to hear their decision.

「It's just like I said before. I won't be able to guarantee your safety if you come with me from here on ahead.」

Everyone was looking at me.

Shannon muttered,

「Even though you said that you will make us happy no matter what.」

She complained like that but I ignored her.

「It will be a battle against Celes. That day, you should have keenly understand her true strength. I won't force anyone. If you want to leave the party here, I will split the party's asset with you and you can leave. If you want to leave the capital, then I'll allow you to come along with us until Beim.」

When I ran my gaze on everyone's face, Aria-san scratched her hair.

「Geez, that's really selfish. You know that I was someone bought by you.」

「Doesn't matter. If you want to leave you're free to do so. ……Honestly speaking, I wish that everyone will leave here. It will be hell from here on. I won't ask you to come with me.」

It was my will to break up the party.

From here on, I and even the ancestors couldn't imagine what would happen.

「I'll defeat Celes. In order to do that it will take a lot of effort. Someone might fall in the middle. Besides, even if we manage to defeat Celes you can't expect any reward from it.」

If we were unlucky then after defeating Celes, there was a possibility that we would become wanted man.

After all I was from Walt House just like Celes.

We were siblings who shared blood.

Miranda-san shrugged.

「That'll be troubling. I want you to prepare the reward properly. Let's see—like Lyle yourself for example.」

In respond to Miranda-san's statement, Sophia-san was,

「Tha, that's a bit—」

Her face reddened and she tried to stop Miranda-san.

But I,

「I don't mind.」

The inside of the room suddenly became quiet.

Miranda-san was slightly surprised.

「Hee, so you're serious.」

I got slightly uneasy after declaring that. In the first place, I didn't know what should I do as a reward. ……Was I being too hasty?

「……I'll hear everyone's answer.」

The Sixth was stifling his laughing voice.

『Lyle, you got a bit embarrassed after finished saying it there. You're flustered in your heart huh.』

I was waiting for their answer. Then unexpectedly it was Clara-san who raised her hand first.

「I'll come along.」

「Eh!?」

Aria-san was the one surprised.

「Wh, why? Because, you said that you have decided your answer—」

「It's upsetting how you're so shocked like that. My answer has been decided from the beginning.」

Aria-san tilted her head in puzzlement.

「What's your reason of coming along?」

When she was asked the reason, it was something that was just like Clara-san.

「I want to write the fact that I saw with my own eyes and leave it behind for later generation. For that, I'll come along with Lyle-san.」

Clara-san was looking at me, so I nodded.

The one who raised her hand next was Eva-san.

「Ye~s, I'm also coming. The reason is……unfortunately it's the same like Clara I guess.」

Clara-san made a sullen expression.

Eva-san continued.

「I want to turn this story into a tale. That's why Lyle, I'll have you aim for the happy ending no matter what. That's the condition of me coming along.」

Tale……happy ending.

I made a smile at Eva-san's line.

「……I'll work hard.」

「I wish that you will make a firm promise there.」

Next was Monica.

「I got a late start but, this Monica too will naturally stay beside chicken di—」

「I've heard your reply before so it's fine.」

Monica fell down on the spot and began to sing a sad song. Her unexpectedly skilled singing was making Eva-san to burn in rivalry for some reason.

Aria-san raised her hand high. It wasn't like it was necessary to raise hand but…….

「I'm also coming! I've thought a lot but, for some reason it feels unpleasant to run away here.」

That wasn't a reason but, I thought it was just like Aria-san and nodded.

Miranda-san slightly raised both her hands.

「Naturally I'm also coming. I want to become Lyle's number one after all. Ah, Shannon is also coming with me.」

Shannon was glaring at me.

「You, I won't forgive you if you fail.」

That attitude was a little bit irritaiting but, I accepted the two's participation.

「What about you Novem?」

Novem looked straight at me.

「If Lyle-sama permit it, then please allow me to accompany you no matter where.」

Novem looked at Miranda-san.

「I won't complain even with you coming along. I have decided to come with Lyle. But, I won't put my trust on you.」

It helped that she didn't say she wouldn't participate if Novem was also here.

And then the last one—.

「I, I'm! I'm……I joined the party to return the favor to Lyle-dono.」

I nodded slightly.

「Sophia-san has returned the favor to me enough. So much so that I'm the one who want to thank you.」

「……I still don't really get it. I also have the feeling of wanting to stay together with everyone. Perhaps I'm lacking in resolve.」

Sophia-san was talking even while stuttering.

「I, I want to come along, not because of being indebted, but by my own will.」

I opened my mouth in front of the embarrassed looking Sophia-san.

「……Thank you.」

The Fourth applaused.

『That's great. Everyone is coming.』

The Fifth made a tired voice.

『……It will be difficult from here. Lyle, resolve yourself.』

The resolve that he meant, was it the resolve to fight Celes? But from the atmosphere it felt like the Fifth meant it in a different meaning.

「Eeh~, what are you all talking about?」

Damian entered the room.

Lily-san was also following behind him.

「It's our situation. More importantly, what's the matter?」

Damian was placing his large staff on his shoulder while,

「You're going to Beim right? Take me there too. I saw the scene yesterday and thought this place is hopeless. Even staying at Arumsaas make me uneasy.」

Lily-san was also motivated.

「Goshujin-sama can do his research no matter where he is after all.」

Damian was laughing.

「As long as there is money that is! And so, give me money assistance too while you're at it. I'm not suited with earning money.」

Novem sighed.

「……He is a person that can be relied on though.」

I smiled and accepted Damian.

「Yeah, that's fine. In exchange, I'll ask you for various helps.」

Damian showed a bit of disapproval, even so,

「Well, alright I guess. It feels like it will be fun if I'm with Lyle. And a lot of things can be procured if we go to Beim so I'm also looking forward to it.」

Clara-san looked at Damian.

「Professor Damian, actually I want to ask you to repair my prosthetic arm.」

「……Who are you? Prosthetic?」

……Like always, he couldn't remember name.

The Seventh spoke with a slightly uneasy voice.

『I never thought that even Damian will come along.』

The Third was laughing.

『It'll be spring soon. It's a season that is also good to start new thing. Let's leave the capital like this and head east.』

Our destination was the capital of adventurer and merchant—Beim.

—Lyle's group that was going to depart was outside the rampart.

Aria was looking at Damian's Porter.

「It's bigger than our Porter.」

Sophia who was nearby talked about what she heard from Monica.

「Apparently it's called Dump Car. It seems that it's like a relative of Porter.」

Aria moved her gaze to Lyle who was looking up at Dump Car.

His eyes were sparkling.

「……Lyle, he like this kind of thing isn't he?」

Sophia looked at Dump Car while,

「The big size is nice. But, it looks like the inside is cramped with many things. If only Porter is slightly bigger.」

It was nice that their travel was comfortable, but it would be better if Porter was slightly more spacious, Sophia said. Aria also agreed with her.

「Ah, I understand that.」

While the two were talking, a youth riding a horse appeared there.

「Aria-san.」

Aria turned around, but at first she didn't understand who the youth was.

「Are you, Lionel?」

Lionel got down from the horse. He was wearing a really expensive looking clothes. Aria thought that it was knight uniform and guessed that Lionel had obtained an official post.

「Looks like you've climbed up really high.」

「……Do you, have a bit of time?」

Aria didn't particularly think much of it and came with Lionel—.

.

While we were outside the rampart, an unexpected person came to see us off.

「Morris-san.」

「Yaa, you look well.」

Morris-san who looked slightly haggard heard that we were at the rampart and rushed here.

「Various things happened though.」

「Is that so? Well, I'm glad I can come to see you off like this. I'm completely in your debt at the subjugation force.」

Morris-san who fought together with us at the hippogriff subjugation was a knight who was plain but did his work well.

「More importantly, Morris-san is looking a bit haggard.」

「Ye, yeah, various things also happened with me.」

He said that he had something to talk about so I listened to him. Apparently Morris-san had received a territory.

But, he didn't understand at all what he should do.

「I don't know what I should start to work with. It's really troubling. I thought that you might know something seeing that your origin was from feudal lord noble, so I wanted to ask you.」

「I see.」

I tightly grabbed the Jewel.

The Third guessed various things but,

『……I don't have any advice for this.』

Toward the Third, the Seventh was,

『No, this is something that the Third is the most suited for.』

『That's why. Look here, from the village's perspective, even if a feudal lord comes he is basically just an outsider. They'll be irritated if such person meddles with them. The will think, even though you don't understand anything. That's why, in this situation not doing anything is the correct answer.』

Seeing me not getting it, the Third explained in detail with exasperated look.

I pretended to think deeply in front of Morris-san.

『At the very least he should wait-and-see for a year. After that, go greet the feudal lord with caregiver position at the area.

Listen to the opinion of that village, and if there is something they need then he should procure it. That's it I think?』

「It seems that it's important to observe the territory for one year at minimum. How about trying to investigate beforehand if there is something that the territory will need? Also, don't forget to greet the feudal lord who seem to have the most influence at the area I guess?」

「Ri, right. Err, in that area—there is a viscount house I think?」

『Also, if he has a son then marry him now. He is a son of a hero in griffon extermination, it'll be better to marry him while his father still has some popularity. Also the matter of taking over the family's headship. It's really troublesome to change the family head, so it'll be better to finish it while they're still in the capital.』

「……Also, does Morris-san has son?」

「Yeah, I have. He is already an adult though?」

「Please let him take over the family headship quickly. After that, is your son married?」

「Eh? No, not yet.」

「It will be really busy after you become the feudal lord, so please take care of it while you can now.」

「I, I see. Got it!」

The Fourth was laughing.

『You properly advised him in the end.』

The Third sounded dissatisfied.

『……All these are only obvious from where I'm standing though.』

The Fifth said to me.

『Oi, where is Aria?』

When I looked around, I couldn't find Aria-san.

—At a spot some distance away from Lyle's group.

Lionel was drawing near to Aria.

「Le, let go!」

「I'm an elite guard captain. I'm a man worthy for you now!」

Originally he planned to confess and then returned to the capital together.

But,

「Who cares. I'm going to depart already, so don't get in the way!」

Lionel's confession failed.

Because of that, he tried to forcefully bring her away but…….

He instead met opposition from Aria and losing in strength.

Aria was overwhelmingly stronger in the contest of strength.

「……Even though I worked hard for your sake!」

「That's why, how does the talk move to there!?」

Lionel was pushed away by Aria and fell on the ground. His brand new uniform was dirtied by mud.

「Ah, sorry.」

Aria was looking apologetic.

Lionel stood up, then he brushed off the dirt that was stuck on his clothes.

「Why won't you understand?」

He glared at Aria and drew out his sword.

Aria was shocked seeing that. Lionel took a step closer.

(I'll threaten her and bring her back like this—)

However, toward Lionel who unsheathed his sword—Aria was merciless.

She hit the blade with her fist to deflect it away, and then she closed their distance immediately and strongly struck Lionel's head with her elbow. Lionel crumbled down from his kenes.

Aria picked up the sword that Lionel let go and threw it to far away.

「Don't screw around! Even though you already have a lover, this is dishonest to her.」

Lionel who was holding his cheek lifted up his face and yelled.

「Then what about that guy! What about Lyle huh! He got a lot of women around him! Getting just one from those—」

Aria scowled hearing those words.

「……Don't treat me like an object.」

Aria said that and instantly vanished from that place. Lionel gritted his teeth. His face distorted with frustration.

「It’s that guy. It’s no good because of that guy!」

Lionel loathed Lyle. He mounted his horse and immediately headed toward the castle gate—.

.

We departed from the capital and came to the riverside to take a break.

The snow still slightly remained and the river’s water was cold, but it had become a lot warmer.

We were sitting around campfire, but Aria-san looked sullen and dissatisfied.

「What? You almost got pushed down, so you pushed back the man instead? Aria is far manlier than the average man aren’t you.」

Miranda-san made fun of her.

Eva-san too.

「Lionel was it? He’s lucky he wasn’t beaten up by Aria. He got off lightly with just a single elbow strike wasn’t he?」

She said such thing to tease Aria-san.

The Fifth intentionally made a cough.

『Aa~, Lyle. Wait for the right timing and back up Aria. Listen well, if possible do it in a place where everyone isn’t looking. Change the topic of the talk right away.』

The Third was teasing the Fifth inside the Jewel.

『As expected from the Fifth who was keeping five women. You’re different!』

『Don't be sarcastic! Listen, this isn't a joke. It will be harsh from here on. It will really be difficult okay!』

I change the topic before Aria-san who was being made fun of got angry.

「Err, Lionel was wearing knight uniform wasn't he?」

「……That's right. Looks like he got promoted.」

Just how did he get promoted?

Miranda-san also joined the talk.

「Even though he look similar with Lyle, will he be alright working in the palace? He might caught Celes's eyes, it's worrying—or not really I guess.」

Shannon heard that story and got strangely angry.

「He already seduced Doris-oneesama but then he even approached Aria too……Walt House is absolutely a slovenly family toward woman.」

I wanted to immediately retort back「You also have the blood of Walt House in you though」, but there were people who fiercely objected to Shannon's statement.

『Wait. I was devoted to Pasetto alone.』

『I was also devoted to a single wife. I want that statement just now taken back.』

『However, there are the Fifth and the Sixth here. Even if we want to deny that, these two's reputation is a bit……』

The Sixth was angry.

『……Can you stop criticizing me every time the topic of woman come up?』

The Fifth was silent.

Aria-san stood up.

「Hm, where are you going?」

Eva-san asked. In reply,

「I'll substitute the lookout.」

She was a bit angry, so I chased after her.

When she arrived at a place with good visibility, Aria-san started complaining while holding her spear.

「Even though I was also scared, everyone just said『If it's Aria there won't be any problem』. Just what do they mean by that. I wonder what they're thinking I am.」

I didn't know what to say to the angry Aria-san.

「Aria-san.」

Aria-san turned around looking slightly awkward.

「……What?」

「Tha, that, you aren't injured right?」

Aria-san looked at herself.

「Do I look injured?」

Voices like『You were teased because you act like that though』came from inside the Jewel, but I somehow understood that it would be no good if I said that out loud.

「Please be careful in the future.」

「You mean about getting hurt?」

「No, not that, about following other person who called out to you. As for Lionel's injury……well, he reap what he sow so it can't be helped.」

Aria-san was looking at me in puzzlement.

「What?」

「Could it be, you're worried for me?」

She honestly asked. When I nodded, Aria-san was looking at me with a grin.

「Hee, is that so. H~m」

It felt like I became the one who was being teased instead, but then Aria-san suddenly looked around. And then she got down and placed her ear on the ground.

「Eh?」

「Be quiet!」

She sensed something like that and,

「—Hey, could it be we are being pursued?」

I grabbed the Jewel and used Arts.

A lot of red dots were moving to surround us……it seemed they were moving using horse.

「……We're being pursued.」

Aria-san looked at me,

「You, get a hold of yourself. Why didn't you notice it?」

Aria-san was staring fixedly at me who was negligent to be on my guard even though I had convenient Arts.

The Fifth was also,

『You idiot. What're you doing suddenly losing focus like this? Come on, quickly go prepare.』

Epilogue

—Lionel was wrapped in bandage.

He was riding on a carriage that was pulled by four horses while yelling angrily at his surrounding.

「Don't let them get away no matter what!」

He used his special right as Special Elite Guard that he obtained and gathered the knights that he could mobilize to pursue after Lyle's group.

The knight who was riding horse near Lionel talked to him loudly.

「Lionel-dono, we'll really obtain reward from Celes-sama personally if we can kill them right!?」

The knights didn't mobilize because of the order from Lionel, but because they wanted to be rewarded by Celes.

「I'll give good report to Celes-sama about the work of you guys later! Just don't kill the red haired girl no matter what. Bring her to in front of me!」

The knight kicked his horse's stomach and raised his speed. The other knights also raised their speed with impatience to obtain achievement.

The equipment of the knights weren't full-body armor, but light things that stressed speed.

They wore armor made from leather and armed with sword or spear.

A magic was fired to the sky. It was the squad that gone ahead sending them notification that they had succeeded in going ahead of Lyle's group.

「I find you, LYYyyLeeEE!」

Lionel whose face distorted unsightly from hatred and jealousy was yelling Lyle's name—.

.

Damian's Dump Car was following behind Porter.

「Damian's vehicle cannot be faster huh.」

I put out my face from the hatch at porter's ceiling and looked at the surrounding's situation. Damian's Porter, Dump Car was unable to produce much speed due to its size.

Eva-san who came out on the roof was looking at far away while holding a bow.

「No matter how I see it, there are trained knights heading this way!」

The map forming inside my head was also showing knights approaching from both sides to sandwich us. There was also a group chasing from behind, and also a squad getting ahead of us.

—I could see a different sight from before.

The Fifth's Art, Map produced map of the surrounding inside the head. The map that I could clearly see when I closed my eyes became even more extensive and changed into a three-dimensional map after I obtained the Art's second stage.

The Art's name was Dimension. It was an Art that could grasp the surrounding terrain with wider range than before and in a three-dimensional shape.

And then he also obtained the second stage of the Sixth's Art Search which was named Spec.

He could obtain the information of the enemy with more detail than before.

He was even able to understand what kind of equipment the knights had in general.

「The amount of information increased drastically.」

The amount of information that made the head felt pained was flowing in all at once.

『How's that Lyle! The Arts of me and the Fifth! You won't find many Art that is better than this for the battlefield!』

The Sixth who was gradually getting noisy might felt his blood boiling. His tension was strangely heightening when a battle was approaching.

This might sound like excuse but……in the first place I was tired from practicing the new Arts. I didn't use the Arts while I was on break and that was why my vigilance loosened.

Even if I was on guard, with the speed of Damian's vehicle we would get caught up sooner or later.

Eva-san asked a question.

「Strange. Aren't their number too few to actually pursue us?」

The Fifth started to think of various things.

『It's also unnatural that Celes broke her promise and came to crush us. Perhaps the people around Celes got impatient to obtain achievement and moved on their own?』

This number was insufficient if she was thinking to seriously finish us off.

「Now then, what to do.」

We were surrounded.

It seemed the spot with the greatest number of enemy was the force that circled around to block our route.

The Third talked.

『It's troublesome being surrounded like this. Yosh!
……Breakthrough from the front.』

The Fourth also agreed.

『Taking Damian's Dump Car int consideration, taking a detour will be hard.』

It wasn't maneuverable due to its size.

Besides, it was more brittle than Porter. I heard that it would breakdown if it carelessly advanced outside the highway.

Charging through just like this would be the best choice.

Eva-san looked up to the sky.

「Those guys are sending signal to each other using magic.」

A fireball was fired to the sky where it burst and created smoke. When their preparation finished they sent signal to their other comrades to match the assault's timing.

I returned for a moment into the vehicle and showed myself at the driver's seat.

「Clara-san, please charge through them just like this.」

「……You're saying absurd thing like usual.」

The exasperated Clara-san was driving with one arm because she had no prosthetic. Right now Damian was preparing a new prosthetic for her by our request.

There were knights lying in wait with barricade prepared at the path ahead where Porter was advancing through.

There weren't even ten knights at the hurriedly constructed mud wall created using magic.

The Seventh said,

『—Lyle, have you resolved yourself?』

I tightly grabbed the Jewel while moving to the rear area and said to Novem and the rest.

「My bad but, it will become violent after this. Shannon, you wait here. Monica, you're staying behind.」

Shannon showed a relieved expression, while Monica's twintail went up lightly in surprise.

「Wh. Why!?」

「There isn't anyone who would protect Shannon and Clara-san if everyone leave.」

Aria-san and Sophia-san were holding their weapon.

「Well, that's how it is.」

「And how many the enemy are?」

Eight people at the front.

Two knights at each side running in parallel with us.

「If it goes well then we'll only need to face 12 people to end this. There're also pursuers from behind but, we might be able to shake them off.」

Novem held up her staff.

「Lyle-sama, here I'll—」

「I'm looking forward to that but, it'll be faster to do it with everyone.」

Miranda-san looked at Novem and smiled while,

「Right. We want to breakthrough quickly, so it will be better to face them with everyone. Also Lyle, can I request you one thing.」

「What?」

「Listen to one request of mine if we're able to breakthrough safely okay? It's fine, it's just a really simple request.」

I felt nothing but anxiety about what she would ask from me, but I nodded and went outside from the ceiling's hatch.

The saber hanging on my waist had average quality because the one with good quality was broken by Celes.

I drew out my saber and looked forward. There the knights standing on our way were withdrawing behind the wall with weapon on hand.

Porter increased its speed and crashed on the wall—breaking through it. When the brake was pressed, the vehicle's frame skidded while stopping.

「As expected from our Porter!」

Eva-san yelled while readying her bow.

「The enemies are coming!」

The fired arrow was deflected by the knight's sword.

The knights were trained well.

The rear hatch opened and Aria-san rushed out from there—.

「You're in the way!」

She beat up two knights with her spear.

Sophia-san hit a knight with the flat part of her battle axe and sent him flying.

「Lyle-dono!」

Sophia-san yelled to me.

A knight slashed at me.

I dodged and kicked him away, then I leaped down from Porter.

The knights surrounded me.

「I'll receive reward from Celes-sama if I defeat you!」

The knights who came slashing had unshaven face and bloodshot eyes.

His age was around thirty.

Looking at the way he swung his sword, this man must also be a knight who had received really strict training.

What kind of person he was before he got led astray by Celes—there was already no way to know about that.

No, there was no meaning to it.

I mowed in reverse using my saber, swinging it from the right to the left and cut his neck.

Blood spurted out. The knight's eyes were opened wide.

He was pressing his slashed neck and tried to say something, but the next knights came slashing. They slashed at the same time from two directions.

「How dare you do that to captain!」

「I'll kill you!」

I kicked one knight away and dodged the spear of the other one while stabbing his chest with my saber. I quickly drew it out, but then a knight who circled behind me tried to stab me with his blade.

The arrow that Eva-san fired pierced that knight's back. I turned around and stabbed the finishing blow at the same time.

The spurt of blood and the blood sticking on the saber were dripping thickly.

Even though I should have been used with monster's blood, this blood was strangely sticky. It made me felt bad.

When I looked around, the other knights were all captured by Miranda-san, including those who fainted.

They were bounded with sticky thread. They were struggling but it didn’t look like they would be able to slip out.

Sophia-san was,

「The pursuing knights are coming!」

When the knights who were pursuing us from both sides were approaching, Novem went forward.

She lifted her silver staff,

「—Blow away.」

When she said that, lightning fell just slightly in front of the horses, exploding the ground.

The horses were blown away by the thunderous sound and impact. The knights riding them were also thrown away and rolled on the ground.

Miranda-san checked that the four of them were defeated and couldn’t move, then she immediately restrained them.

I faced the captured knights.

That knight was glaring at me.

「Don’t think that I don’t know! You’re the idiot son of Walt House who got disinherited! If I can obtain your head, Celes-sama will—」

I grabbed the knight’s head with my left hand.

「……Only answer my question.」

When I ordered so, the knight opened his mouth but no voice came out which shocked him.

The Third’s Art controlled and bewildered his mind.

This Art was Mind's second stage, Control. Its compelling force was stronger than Mind and could also control the body of other people against the will of the target himself.

It was convenient that it didn't took time to interfere with the target's mind like Mind. However, because the target was maintaining their mind, the resistance was strong and the mana consumption was heavy.

……It was a really terrible Art.

「Who is the one giving you guys instruction to chase after us?」

Even though the knight didn't want to talk, he was surprised that his mouth was moving by itself.

「I, it's Lionel. The captain of the Special Elite Guards and Celes-sama's favorite.」

「Lionel does? How did that guy become Celes's favorite?」

「I, I don't know. But, that guy called us and said that Celes-sama will personally reward us if we take the head of you all.」

The Third's exasperated voice came from the Jewel.

『She is placing him on her side even though he look similar with Lyle? Even though she hate Lyle as though she is resenting him.』

I asked question one after another.

「Is there any other pursuer other than you guys?」

「No, none. Lionel only gathered the knights who are currently free.」

「Is there even any formal order to take us down given out?」

「There isn't. It's unrelated with the palace.」

The knight wasn't hiding his surprise that he was answering my question. The feeling of talking even though he didn't want to talk made him feared me, causing his expression to turn strange.

「……Will there more pursuer after this?」

「I don't know but, if Lionel take action then perhaps more pursuer will come.」

The palace and Celes weren't sending pursuer toward us.

It became really relieving just from understanding this.

When my left hand let go, the knight felt that his mouth finally followed his own will again and got relieved.

I kicked him to make him fainted, then I said to everyone.

「Change of plan. We will intercept Lionel here.」

Aria-san gripped her spear tightly.

「Are we going to kill Lionel?」

Her expression was a bit pale because I was soaked in blood.

When I was going to answer her that we would do so if he was getting in our way,

The Seventh spoke out.

『Lyle, wait a second. About Lionel, he might be usable.』

I grasped the Jewel, then the Fourth was the one answering me.

『He is rash and imprudent. An incompetent hard worker is an extremely troubling existence to have as an ally, but if such person is

in the enemy side, then we should warmly welcome it. Let's use him to the utmost.』

The Fifth was also in agreement.

『I don't know why Celes took a liking to him but, her personality is like that. Perhaps she promoted Lionel without really thinking anything. He might get killed by Celes right away, but left him alive to make him hold back Bahnseim.』

In that case…….

The Fourth spoke with a voice that he was surely making while laughing maliciously.

『My Art. Use its second stage.』

I wiped my face with the wet towel Novem brought to me and changed the plan.

「……We will wait Lionel here before moving again after that.」

Sophia-san was surprised.

「Eh? Wh, why is that? If we're going to escape than earlier will be—」

I gave instruction with a gesture to Damian who was riding Dump Car to go ahead of us.

This time Porter would be the one running behind Dump Car.

「Lionel and his men absolutely won't be able to catch up to us.」

The second stage of the Fourth's Art was Up Down. This Art simply raised our traveling speed while lowering the enemy's traveling speed.

That was all, but the effect was great.

If I used this Art, then in most case our traveling speed would become superior.

I got on Porter and confirmed that everyone had got in before waiting for Lionel.

.

—Lyle and his group was before his eyes.

But, Lionel was hurling abuse to his surrounding with an enraged expression.

「Why aren't we catching up!? These slowpokes!」

The speed of the carriage that Lionel was riding was going down. The same thing also happened to the knights around him.

Even though Lyle and others were within his sight, he couldn't get closer at all.

Lyle was on Porter while looking his way. His face was—smiling.

That frustrated Lionel unbearably.

「Run faster!」

He took away the whip from the coachman and hit the horse. Even so their speed didn't change.

The sun was gradually setting. Then,

「Perhaps it'll better to withdraw already.」

「Special Elite Guards captain, it's over.」

「It’s already night. We also have to check the condition of our comrades.」

Such resigned voices were starting to appear. Lionel’s face distorted even further in vexation.

「DAMN IITTTTTTT!!」

Lionel’s yell resounded around in vain—.

.

Night.

We who managed to shake off Lionel and his men arrived in a small village.

We borrowed the square and camped there.

I went away from everyone alone and vomited.

I was hiding behind some plants while pressing my chest in pain. The ancestors’ reactions were,

『……You’ll get used to it soon. Though you also can’t get too used to it.』

『My first kill was a bandit. I can’t forget it even now.』

『This is only for now. After this you’ll get used to it even if you don’t want it.』

『Lyle, show a strong appearance to everyone even more than so far.』

『Originally, it would be better to do this with bandit or the like.』

By that did he mean that it would be better if I the one I killed was at least a heinous criminal? It hurt, the smell of my stomach juice was painfully stinging to the inside of my nose.

A hand was placed on the back of me who was in such state.

When I turned around in surprise,

「……Miranda-san.」

「As expected you're in pain. Your complexion was bad after the battle was over, so I thought you will become like this.」

I received a drink and rinsed my mouth. Then Miranda-san talked to me.

「Even though you don't need to hide like this.」

「……It will make everyone uneasy.」

Miranda-san didn't deny my words. She changed the topic.

「Lyle, do you remember our talk before the battle?」

「Do you mean about me listening to one request from you?」

「That's right. That request is—adding 『san』 is forbidden.」

It seemed I couldn't call her Miranda-san like until now.

「Eh? Why?」

When I asked back without polite language, Miranda-san was utterly exasperated.

「If you only call Novem, Monica, and Shannon without honorific while adding san at everyone else's name, it will feel discriminatory isn't it? It's not just me, call everyone without honorific.」

The Fifth understood.

『……Well, it's just as she say.』

Miranda-san stared at my eyes.

「We're putting our lives at risk here. Lyle, believe in us more.」

「……I believe in everyone.」

「I wonder. If possible I want you to go as far as having faith in us though. Well, that depends on Lyle's feeling though, it won't be any use even if I'm complaining.」

Miranda-san wiped my mouth with towel.

When I wanted to refuse from feeling embarrassed,

「It's alright.」

She said that and wiped my chest that was dirty from my vomit.

「Don't get embarrassed just from this much.」

「Ri, right.」

「Rely on the people around you more. Lyle, everyone is following you by staking their life. We aren't playing around.」

「……Yes.」

「That's right, this isn't a game,. That's why, take responsibility properly.」

Miranda-san said that and smiled. Her smile was really pretty—for some reason it felt bewitching.

「Have you calmed down?」

「Yes, I feel alright I think.」

「Then, rest already for today. We will take care of the lookout.」

「But—」

Miranda-san flicked my forehead with her finger.

When I pressed my forehead,

「That's why, rely on us.」

Mirnada-san said that and returned to where everyone was. Even though her back was feminine, it looked reliable.

Porter's rear space.

Shannon's sleeper's breathing—or rather her snore was audible.

I was lying down on the seat with a blanket covering me.

I didn't sleep and brought up the blue Jewel with my hand to stare at it. I recalled that day.

The day I made the promise with the ancestors.

That day, I promised with the ancestors.

「A promise?」

『Yes, we can't cooperate with you if you don't at least keep this promise.』

The room of the round table.

The Third stood in front of me with a serious expression.

『Survive till the end.』

That was all.

「……Eh?」

The Fifth made a troubled smile at the bewildered me.

『I wonder when you will understand, how difficult it is to even do just that.』

The Third was talking to me unusually seriously.

『We won't allow you to die and become a hero. Survive till the end even if you're cursed as villain. That's what you have to promise us.』

In many heroic tales, it wasn't rare for the hero to die at the end.

Other than that there was also the pattern of them throwing away normal life and retiring to seclusion and the like.

The Seventh was looking at me in worry.

『If it completely start, then a lot of people will die whether they wish to get involved or not with it. The country will be exhausted, and then other country or organization aiming at that chance will appear. Even if Celes is defeated it won't end there. It will only begin from there.』

The Sixth nodded.

『Someone will have to unite everyone. If there is the real hero, then you will have to help him. It won't end with just defeating Celes, but only when the recovery after that is finished.』

The Fourth was making a conflicted expression.

『We don’t know just how much time it will take for the recovery. It will depend on Celes but, it might not end even if Lyle take his whole life doing it.』

I was perplexed that they suddenly talked about the matter after I won.

The ancestors were seeing through how I was feeling.

『We don’t plan to deny the way of fighting where it’ll be fine as long as you just win. But don’t think that you can just do anything for that.』

The Seventh continued after the Third.

『Lyle, You need to think about after you defeat Celes, how you will act postwar. The wish that you said is something like that.』

The Fourth took off his glasses.

『If you become a hero who died defeating Celes, you might become really popular among the historians and in the tales at the future. But, if you’re walking the path of killing many and defeating Celes, then live to save a lot of life after that.』

The Sixth raised his voice.

『Survive even if you are cursed as villain! When you die as hero, you will have nothing remaining for you. It will be pointless if you don’t survive!』

The Fifth scratched his hair.

『In other words, live and grasp victory. It’s a victory that is found after defeating Celes. Throw away the thinking that you just need to defeat Celes and that’s it.』

From here on, the continent would be stormy with Celes at the center.

If fellow countries were getting in dispute with each other to obtain hegemony in such stormy continent, it would become something horrible.

「……That's a difficult promise. Even though I still don't even have any prospect of beating Celes.」

The Third laughed.

『Certainly I cannot see any future where you win. But, we can take you until the stage to face her.』

「Stage?」

The Seventh said the answer.

『It's Bahnseim Kingdom. Ally yourself with the surrounding countries and the nobles within the country. Lead the allied army and crush Bahnseim.』

The Sixth was making a troubled expression.

『The country called Bahnseim has become slightly too big. Taking it on with just one or two country will take too much time.』

The Third looked at me and put his hand on his chin.

『With that you can finally see the prospect of victory against Bahnseim Kingdom. What's left is how to defeat Celes. Let's think about that from here on, Lyle……a fight isn't won if you don't survive it.』

When I nodded, within the blue shining Jewel—in the room of the round table, the Third held out his hand toward me.

『—This day today. This is the starting point. Lyle’s story will begin from here.』

The Third said that perhaps this was a bit too dramatic and smiled in embarrassment.

『Surely we're here not just for teaching you Arts. We were resurrected as memory in order to meet Lyle. I can think like that if it's now.』

Beginning from here.

Until now I decided my path following what I was told but, from today I would decide the path that I should walk by myself.

From here……my story would begin.

It would finally begin.

The Third's words felt like they were deeply engraved in my chest.

『Even so, when I noticed you have become really reliable.』

「Eh?」

The face of the Third looking at me was different from before. He was smiling kindly.

『I'm remembering the time when we first met.』

The Fourth hid his mouth with his fist and laughed.

『That pathetic Lyle made such decision. ……Even though it would be fine even if you run away.』

The Fifth was looking at me with a troubled and sad look.

『We didn't want you to choose a path like the one we walked. You're really fine with this aren't you?』

The Fifth said that if it was now I could still go back. I nodded deeply to him.

「I already decided. I'll……defeat Celes.」

The Sixth was smiling but, he looked sad somewhere inside.

『Nicely said! ……It's really, nicely said, Lyle.』

The Seventh was pressing his chest with his right hand. He grabbed his clothes. I could peek at the inside of his tormented heart.

『You……resent me who cause you to have to lay your hand on your family. I am the cause of everything! I'm the one responsible to cause you to make this kind of decision.』

I shook my head and said to the Seventh.

「You're wrong. I'm the one who decided this. Celes and—my parents. It's me who decided to fight against my family. I don't resent Seventh.」

The Seventh must be harboring various anguishes.

He was holding back his tears.

In the place of the Seventh who couldn't talk, the Third opened his mouth.

『Lyle, you've become……strong and reliable. You're, a magnificent man of Walt House.』

This day, it felt like the ancestors and—the Jewel recognized me in the true meaning.

.

When I noticed morning had come.

It seemed Shannon had woken up. She wasn't nearby, instead Eva-san—Eva was looking my way under a blanket.

「Oh, you're awake?」

「Where is everyone?」

「They're tidying up. I was keeping watch until just now, so I'm going to rest after this.」

She was holding a paper and pen. She didn't look like she was resting at all.

「What are you writing?」

「New song or tale. But, I have no theme for it.」

Eva's shoulders dropped in dejected because she had no material. I suggested a material for her.

「Can I ask you to accept a request for a song?」

「What? A new material?」

「Well, something like that. Actually there are people who I want to have song and tale made for them.」

「Who? What kind of people?」

It made me happy that she got interested.

「They're the ancestors of Walt House.」

Right after that, Eva frowned and made a displeased face.

「You don't want to do it?」

「Because, that kind of request usually ask for their own bloodline to be glorified and exaggerated. It usually sounded false, in fact many people are lying about it.」

It seemed to be a request that wasn't interesting for Eva.

「It's fine. They weren't perfect people. There were also a lot of problem with their personality.」

When I said that, Eva said 「Then I'll listen to the story」 and accepted the request.

The inside of the Jewel was noisy.

『Wait a second, Lyle is trying to turn our life into song!』

『Lyle, wait. What are you planning to say!?』

『……I've got nothing but bad premonition.』

『No, we should make use of this instead! Lyle, cut the part related to woman in my story you get it? Do that!』

『Lyle, tell Eva what an amazing person your Ojii-chan was! After that, talk honestly about the Sixth.』

Inside the Jewel the Sixth said something like 『You're always so nagging even now!』 and grappled with the Seventh. It became noisy with a fight starting. They were really annoying.

Eva prepared to take a memo and sat beside me. She peered at my face.

「Now, let me hear it. What kind of ancestors they were?」

「Then, I'll start from the First I guess. His name was Basil Walt.」

What came to mind was the figure of the First who was always laughing heartily and when he was angry.

「He was the third son of capital noble Walt House. Even though his house was a noble house but it was at the bottom rung and poor.

But, he had someone he loved. To become a man that suited that person he volunteered into a group of pioneers.」

「My, what a splendid person.」

「Even though he never even talked with that person, the First loved her and did his best. And then, the girl also loved the First it seemed.」

Eva stopped her hand that was taking memo.

「Ee~, that's suspicious. The two of them getting together after that and obtain happy end is a bit cliché I think.」

It seemed she wanted to say that it was lacking climax.

I laughed a bit and shook my head.

「The First succeeded in opening up a new land and returned to the capital bringing money. In the day of his return, the girl was marrying other person. The First's first love didn't bear fruit.」

「……E, err」

「He was really broken up. He was drinking alcohol everyday and rampaged. The people around him were worried at the First who wouldn't marry and pestered him a lot. It seemed that he found it annoying. That was why, the First lied.」

「Lied?」

「Walt House has precepts for taking wife! That's why, if there isn't any suitable woman I absolutely won't marry! He said.」

Eva's mouth was opening wide.

「Then you know, the funny part is from here. Those precepts are remaining even now and being followed carefully. Even though the precepts for taking wife of Walt House were just a lie.」

Seeing me having fun talking, Eva stared at me in wonder.

「What?」

「Lyle, how are you able to talk about it like you have seen it yourself? This kind of story usually will be passed down by word-of-mouth with various embellishments so that this First will become a magnificent character. From the way you talk, how should I say it, that person really feels human.」

……I deliberated whether to gloss over the matter or spoke the truth.

There was also the matter of Celes's Jewel.

If the truth about the blue Jewel I had came out in this bad timing, the others might become on guard against it. No, they would surely be on guard.

「But, it's interesting right?」

「You're right. It's far better than listening a talk that boasts just how amazing their ancestor was. Got it. I'll turn it into song without fail. That's why, tell me more.」

I continued talking how the First became Dragon Slayer and got feared a lot because of it.

Eva was listening to the failure story and various other stories of the first in surprise but also with a smile.

The inside of the Jewel was continuing to be noisy. When I noticed the five were quarreling.

『Don’t make it as my fault!』

『It’s your fault! At that time the Third also did something like that to me!』

『Because of your fault I was! We were like that! I’ll make you pay it back here right now!』

『Uncle! Uncle! Two at once is cowardly—』

『Learn my long standing grudgeeeee!』

……The ancestors who were very different from the stories that were passed down.

I thought it would be interesting to make the life story of such people into song.

Even if someday everyone would vanish from the Jewel, when I heard the song—their tale would I be able to recall this noisiness?

To be continued to Sevens 8

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